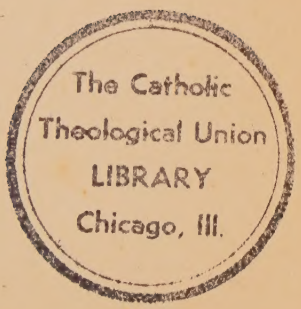
THE SODALITY OF OUR LADY

HISTORICAL SKETCHES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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

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The Sodality of Our Lady

Historical Sketches

Compiled by

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Priest of the Society of Jesus

Translated by

Two members of the Prima Primaria

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THE SODALITY OF OUR LADY

WORDS OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFFS

Few institutions, in the bosom, fruitful as it is, of the Catholic Church, have received such beautiful tributes of praise as the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin. Gregory XIII (Bull *Omnipotentis Dei,* Dec. 5, 1584), Sixtus V (1587), Clement VIII (1602) and Gregory XV (1621) took great pleasure in encouraging them, and Benedict XIV crowned the spiritual munificence of his predecessors by his "Golden Bull" *Gloriosæ Dominæ.*

After calling to mind in magnificent terms the purpose of St. Ignatius in forming his religious phalanx, he adds: "Among all the holy labors of their Institute, the Jesuits following a very sagacious idea, already realized in a thousand places, have diligently undertaken to enroll youth in pious confraternities or sodalities of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God; and, by inducing them to consecrate themselves to the honor and service of her

whom the Holy Ghost calls the Mother of Beautiful Love, of the Fear of God and of true knowledge, they help them to rise to the heights of Christion perfection and lead them to the haven of eternal salvation. It is impossible to conceive of the influence these associations have exerted in all classes of society.

"Some, who from their earliest years trod the way of innocence and piety under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, preserved to the end an irreproachable conduct and deserved to crown their exemplary lives by final perseverance.

"Others, tearing themselves away from the allurements of the vices which wretchedly enslaved them, and from the paths of iniquity in which they were entangled, brought back to the straight way by the assistance of the most clement Mother of God, began thereafter to lead a life of temperance, of justice and of piety.

"Not a few, thanks to the tender devotion which they had conceived at an early age for the Mother of God, scaling the highest points of divine charity, and bravely abandoning the false goods and perishable pleasures of this world, sought in the religious life a holier existence, and thus, less exposed and nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ through the vows of religion, devoted themselves altogether to the work of their own perfection and the salvation of souls.

"We ourselves, in our own youth, were a mem-

ber of the Sodality of the Assumption in the Professed House of the Jesuits at Rome, and remember with pleasure that we took part in the pious exercises of the Sodality to the great good and spiritual consolation of Our soul. We also regard it as a duty of Our pastoral charge to take under Our Apostolic protection and to encompass with Our favors, these nurseries, in which solid virtues grow and which serve so powerfully in the formation of Christian youth and the salvation of souls." [1]

At the time of the tercentenary of the canonical erection of the *Prima Primaria* (1884), His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, formerly a Sodalist at the Roman College, expressed also his kindly feeling towards Sodalities:

"Among all the associations abundant in fruits of salvation," he says, "which have been established throughout the entire world in honor of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, the one which indisputably occupies the first place, is the Sodality called *Prima Primaria.* This Sodality, always remarkable for the number of its associates, developed so rapidly, that it was not long before it spread to the extremities of the world; so that even in our days, it counts affiliations in all, even the most distant countries." [2]

[1] From the Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ,* 27 Sept., 1748.

[2] Brief *Frugiferas inter,* 27 May, 1884.

The Three Hundredth Anniversary in 1884

As we have mentioned the tercentenary of the foundation of the *Prima Primaria,* we shall take the liberty to recall in passing with what magnificence it was celebrated at Rome. From the pomp displayed on this occasion, one can better judge the importance of this institution of Sodalities, the history of which we are going to describe.

"On the day after the feast of the Immaculate Conception," wrote an eye-witness, "the jubilee of the tercentenary of the *Primaria* opened here. On the eve of the feast, more than 18,000 people thronged the vast nave of the Gesù. The beautiful church of St. Ignatius was adorned, for the opening of the centenary, as on its greatest feast days. The Roman decorators sought to surpass themselves. The Sodalists offered, for the expenses of the celebration, the considerable sum of 8,000 francs. Two hundred chandeliers with their 2,000 candles, transform the dome into a radiant firmament. A picture, over 50 feet high, reproducing the image of Mary venerated in the chapel of the *Prima Primaria,* stands out against an immense purple hanging, above the main altar. In the choir are arranged the chairs intended for the dignitaries and for the representatives of the different Roman Sodalities. In the sanctuary there is a place reserved for the General of the Jesuits.

"The students of the German College are in

charge of the ceremonies the first day; the second is reserved for the students of the South American College; and for the third, representatives from all the nations will be chosen. The greatest artists of the Roman basilicas have come together to execute, in Mary's honor, the most beautiful pieces of their repertory. The services last easily three or four hours, and yet no one finds them long. The music, the lights, the piety of those present, all make you forget that the hours are slipping by. In Heaven we shall never be weary. Celebrations like this have indeed something which is of Heaven."

These details are concluded as follows by the correspondent of the Belgian paper *Le Bien Publique* of Ghent.

"Here, at Rome, for the last four days, the tercentenary of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin has been celebrated. Even in these times, many illustrious names are enrolled on the lists of the Sodalities. Add on to this the goodwill with which the Sovereign Pontiff, formerly [in 1829] a member himself of the *Prima Primaria,* welcomes all that is done to unite Christian youth in associations of prayer and charity; the magnificence which has been displayed in that large and beautiful church of St. Ignatius, where the celebrated frescoes of Brother Pozzi and the precious marbles in the light of 200 candelabra shine with a new splendor; the presence of many eminent members of the episcopate and the Roman court at the jubilee cere-

monies; and you will not be surprised at the throng which crowded to the centenary celebrations of the Sodality. On Sunday the fourteenth, the last day of the triduum, Mgr. Schiaffino sang the Pontifical Mass and preached a superb discourse, which we earnestly hope will be published. A synopsis could give one but a feeble idea of its worth: faith, love for the Blessed Virgin, and the noble prelate's affection for the Society of Jesus gave magnificent emphasis to his eloquent words.

"The Sovereign Pontiff, whose laborious days render access to him very difficult, deigned to accord a private audience to Rev. Fr. Sanguinetti, Director of the Primary Sodality of Rome, as well as to the Marquis Serlupi, Commander Saint-Mihiel and Chevalier Centamori, its chief dignitaries. The Holy Father recalled the joy and consolation of the years he spent in the Roman College: he recalled among others a Latin discourse which he delivered in honor of St. Aloysius Gonzaga and some theses which he sustained at this University; he had had the pleasure of finding them again in the Vatican library. He spoke of the Sodality (what could he say that would be more encouraging than the statements he had recorded in the last jubilee Brief?); he spoke at great length about the theological and philosophical studies of the Roman College. 'I am truly pleased,' he said, 'with the Gregorian University; it cannot do better work than it is doing in our day.'

" 'Most Holy Father,' answered Fr. Sanguinetti, 'it would be a most precious encouragement for the Professors of the College, to repeat to them the benevolent words of Your Holiness.'

" 'I permit you,' resumed the Pope, 'to tell them in my name that I am entirely satisfied with the Professors, satisfied with the results obtained from their teaching, very satisfied with the number of their students; for I have learned with great pleasure that their classes are full; solid and thorough instruction is given in them.' He added still more praises and left the Director and the chief dignitaries of the Primary under the charm of his august benevolence."

WORDS OF THE SAINTS

The Saints in their turn were never tired of praising the advantages of Our Lady's Sodalities. Their vindication by St. Alphonsus de Liguori[1] is celebrated: it will stand as a splendid example of all the others.

"Certain people," says the holy Doctor, "disapprove of Confraternities because they sometimes give rise to quarrels and because many join them for temporal motives. But, as churches and the Sacraments are not condemned because there are many who make bad use of them, neither should the Sodality. The Sovereign Pontiffs, so far from condemning them, have approved and highly commended them, and also enriched them with many Indulgences.

"St. Francis de Sales, in the *Introduction to a Devout Life*,[2] earnestly exhorts seculars to join them.

"What pains, moreover, did not St. Charles Borromeo take to establish and multiply these Sodalities? In his synods, he particularly recommends Confessors to engage their penitents to join them. And with good reason, for Sodalities, especially

[1] *Glories of Mary*, II. 7.
[2] II. 15.

those of the Blessed Virgin, are so many Noah's arks, in which poor seculars find a refuge from the deluge of temptations and sins which inundate the world. We, from the experience of our Missions, well know the utility of these Sodalities; as a rule, a man who does not attend the meetings of a Sodality commits more sins than twenty men who attend them. A Sodality can well be called a 'tower of David; a thousand bucklers hanging upon it—all the armor of valiant men.'[3] The reason why the Sodalities do so much good is, that in them the members acquire many weapons of defense against hell, and put into practise the requisite means to preserve Divine Grace, which are seldom made use of by seculars who are not members of these Sodalities.

"In the first place, one means of salvation is to meditate on the eternal truths: 'Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin.'[4] How many are lost because they neglect to do this! 'With desolation is all the land made desolate because there is none that considereth in his heart.'[5] But those who attend the meetings of their Sodalities are led to think of these truths by many meditations, lectures and sermons they hear there, as the Good Shepherd said: 'My sheep hear my voice.'[6]

[3] *Cant.* IV.
[4] *Eccli.* VII.
[5] Jer. XII.
[6] John X.

"In the second place, to save one's soul prayer is necessary: 'Ask and you shall receive.'[7] This the members of Confraternities do constantly. God also hears their prayers the more readily, for He says Himself that He grants graces more willingly to prayers offered up in common: 'If two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in Heaven.'[8] On which St. Ambrose says: 'Many who are weak, when united become strong; and it is impossible that the prayers of many should not be heard. Many little ones, while gathered together in spirit, become powerful; it is impossible that the prayers of many should not be granted.'

"In the third place, in Confraternities the Sacraments are more likely to be frequented, both on account of the rules and of the example which is given by the other members. And thus perseverance in grace is more easily obtained, because the sacred Council of Trent has declared that Holy Communion is 'an antidote whereby we may be freed from daily faults and preserved from mortal sins.'

"In the fourth place, besides the frequentation of the Sacraments in Confraternities, many acts of humility and charity towards sick members and the poor are performed. Well would it be if this

[7] John XIV.
[8] Matth. XVIII.

holy custom of assisting the sick poor of the place were introduced in all Confraternities.

"It would also be of the greatest advantage to introduce the Secret Sodality, composed of the more fervent members, in honor of the Divine Mother herself.[9]

"I will here give in a few words, the most usual exercises of the Secret Sodality: 1. Half an hour's spiritual reading; 2. Vespers and Complin of the Holy Ghost are said; 3. The Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and the members whose turn it is, perform some act of mortification, such as carrying a cross on their shoulders, and the like; 4. They make a quarter of an hour's meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ; 5. Each one accuses himself of the faults he has committed against the rules and receives a penance from the Father; 6. A member reads out the little flowers of mortification performed during the past week; and then announces the novenas which occur, etc. At the end, they take the dicipline during the space of a *Miserere* and a *Salve Regina*, and then each one goes to kiss the feet of a Crucifix placed for this purpose on the step of the altar. The members' rules are: 1. To make mental prayer every day; 2. To pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin; 3. To make the examination of conscience in the evening; 4. Spiritual reading; 5. To avoid plays

[9] The term *secret* formerly had no unpopular meaning; it did not indicate a secret character, but simply a selectness.

and worldly conversations; 6. To frequent the Sacraments and perform some little acts of mortification, such as the little chain, discipline, etc.; 7. To recommend to God each day the souls in Purgatory and sinners; 8. When a member is ill, the others are to visit him.

"But now let us return to our point.

"In the fifth place, we have said how profitable it is to our salvation to serve the Mother of God, and what else do the members do in Sodalities but serve her? How much is she not praised there! How many prayers are not there offered to her! From the very beginning, the members are consecrated to her service, and they choose her in an especial manner for their sovereign Lady and Mother; they are inscribed in the book of the children of Mary; hence as they are her servants and children in an especial manner, they are treated in a special manner by her, and she protects them in life and in death. So that a member of a Sodality of Our Lady can say: 'Now all good things came to me together with it.'

"Each member should therefore pay attention to two things; First of all, to the object he should have in view, which should be no other than to serve God and His Mother Mary, and to save his soul; secondly, not to allow worldly affairs to prevent his attendance on the appointed days, for he has there to attend to the most important business he has in the world, which is his eternal salvation.

He should also endeavor to draw as many others as he can to join the Sodality, and especially to bring back those members who have left it. Oh, with what terrible chastisements has Our Lord punished those who have abandoned the Sodality of Our Blessed Lady! There was a Sodalist who did so at Naples, and when he was exhorted to return, he answered: 'I will do so when my legs are broken and my head cut off.' It was a prophecy he made, for a short time afterwards some enemies of his broke his legs and cut off his head.[10]

"On the other hand, the Sodalists who persevere have both their temporal and spiritual wants provided for by Mary. 'All her domestics are clothed with double garments.' Father Auriemma relates how many special graces Mary grants to members of the Sodality both in life and in death, but more particularly in death.[11] Father Crasset gives an account[12] of a young man who, in the year 1586, was dying. He fell asleep; but afterwards waking he said to his Confessor: 'Oh, Father! I have been in great danger of damnation, but Our Blessed Lady rescued me. The devils presented my sins before Our Lord's tribunal; they were already preparing to drag me to hell; but the Blessed Virgin came and said to them: 'Where are you taking this young man? what business have you with a servant of

[10] Sarnelli, *Cong.*, P. I.
[11] *Aff.* II. 4.
[12] *Ver. dév.* II.

mine, who has served me so long in my Sodality?' The devils fled, and thus was I delivered from their hands.'

"The same author also relates that another member also at the point of death, had a great battle with hell; but at length, victorious and filled with joy, he exclaimed: 'Oh! what a blessing it is to serve Our Holy Mother in her Sodality!' and thus filled with consolation, he expired."

WORDS OF THE JESUIT GENERALS

After such words of praise, it is not surprising that the Generals of the Jesuits warmly commend the Sodality.

"It is a leaven," said Father Mutius Vitelleschi, "a pure and powerful leaven, which the Queen of Heaven puts in the midst of Catholic youth. . . . It is powerful itself and operates on all"; he expected from it "abundant graces and infinite blessings," and he exhorted all Superiors "not to neglect this powerful support of Colleges, if they did not wish to see them degenerate and go to ruin; but rather to promote the association with the greatest possible care and to consecrate to it the best forces of the Order, even as far as to lay other works aside for the advancement of this one; for nothing greater can be done for the glory of God than what is done for young people by the Sodality." [1]

Not long ago, Rev. Father Anderledy, one of the last Generals of the Order, by his commentary on the Encyclical *Humanum Genus* of His Holiness Leo XIII, rekindled the zeal of all his Religious on this subject. After a very concise summary of the history of the Sodalities, he concluded in these

[1] Encyclical letter of 1631.

terms: "Let us remember how much in former times our Society achieved through the means of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary: let us strive to multiply these pious associations with all the influence and activity of which we are capable and there is no doubt but that the same efforts will again produce the same results." [2]

[2] June 8th, 1884.

THE SODALITY IN VARIOUS PLACES

Beginnings

LIKE the majority of great works, the Sodality of Our Lady had a most modest beginning. The mustard seed was to become a great tree.

In the year 1563, Father John Leunis was Professor of Grammar at the Roman College. God had reserved for him the mission of implanting the pious association of the Sodality of Our Lady in the Eternal City, whence it was destined, like a propitious star, to shine upon the whole world.

After living until the following year in Rome, Father Leunis was sent to Perugia and later on to Paris, where he spread with the same success the devotion to Our Lady. He founded at the Jesuit College of Billom a Sodality which numbered among its members Father James Salès, martyr of the Holy Eucharist, in 1593. Father Salès is one of the first martyrs of the Sodalities of Our Lady.[1]

[1] Father Gervase Celi, S.J., deals exhaustively with this question in the March issue of the *Stella Matutina* of 1907. Here is his conclusion: "Father Salès is therefore one of the Martyrs of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin. But I think it can be positively asserted that he is the *first martyr* of the Sodality. Historians, it is true, count among its

In 1569, Father Leunis was appointed by his Superiors to bring assistance to the Catholic soldiers, then cruelly tried by the religious wars, in the neighborhood of Lyons, and finally he died piously at Turin in 1584.

In the year 1564, the students of the Sodality founded the year before, 70 in number, the flower of the Roman College, placed themselves under the special protection of Mary, and it was this same year that the first rules of their association were drawn up. Here are the regulations in substance:[2]

"The Sodalists had for aim progress in piety and in studies. Every week they approached the tribunal of Penance, so as to purify their hearts from the least stain and thus make themselves agreeable to their Immaculate Patroness. At least

heroes who have given their lives to Jesus Christ, Blessed Edmund Campion, put to death in London in 1581, and Blessed Rudolph Aquaviva, martyred at Salsette in 1583, twelve and ten years respectively before Father Salès. But these two Blesseds can only claim the title of Sodalists in its broadest sense; that is to say as Sodality Directors, for they were already Religious of the Society of Jesus. Campion directed the Sodality of Prague, and Aquaviva that of the German College at Rome. Father Salès was a Sodalist in the strict sense of the word, and until new discoveries are made which may weaken the opinion I express, it seems to me that Salès may be regarded as the first Sodalist to dye with his blood the Album of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin."

[2] The following summary is taken from DELPLACE, *History of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin.*

every month they received the Holy Eucharist. Every day they assisted at Holy Mass and said either the Rosary or certain prayers from the Manual of the Sodality. When the classes were over, before leaving the College, they meditated for a quarter of an hour on some pious subject, and, for a second quarter of an hour, they considered their good resolutions.

"On Sunday, after the chanting of Vespers and a short exhortation given by the Father Director, they either visited the hospitals to console the sick, or did other works of charity. A Prefect and twelve officers shared the care of helping their young fellow-scholars by their advice; a Jesuit Father presided over all their exercises." Such are, according to Sacchini, the rules which at the start directed the pious assembly, in almost every detail. Sacchini added in 1630, "they are still observed to-day."[3]

The great advantage of these reunions, as the same author remarks, was that, united with each other by the bonds of piety and of zeal, the students avoided dangerous companions and thus escaped one of the most perilous temptations of youth. Experience was to show that it was a work inspired by grace, for progress in studies as well as for advancement in virtue.

In 1567, the Sodality held its meetings in the Church of the Annunciation. This little Church

[3] *History of the Society of Jesus,* II. no. 37.

was begun by the charity of a niece of Paul IV, Lady Victoria Tolfa Orsini, who presented her work to the Roman College in 1562. The Cardinal of Augsburg, Otto Truchsès, laid the corner stone with great solemnity. It was this sanctuary of Mary which St. Aloysius Gonzaga used to visit several times each day during four whole years; here it was that he shed such abundant tears during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, here that he became absorbed so often in sublime prayer. As the Church was his favorite during his stay in the Roman College, it kept his precious relics from June 15, 1620, to Aug. 2, 1649. Above the central nave is the present Chapel of the *Prima Primaria.*

In 1569, the Sodality was divided into two parts. One, which afterwards bore the name of *Secunda Primaria,* included all the students under eighteen years of age; the other, called the *Prima Primaria,* brought together the rhetoricians, philosophers and theologians.

The members of the Senior Sodality of the Roman College, rhetoricians, philosophers and theologians, formed in 1569 the first Literary Academy which is mentioned in the history of the Jesuit Colleges. This style of reunion, therefore, so instrumental in promoting studies and so calculated to stimulate the ambition of Students, owes its origin to the Sodality of Our Lady. This fact explains why the *Ratio Studiorum* or Course of Studies, later

on, usually required those applying for entrance into the Academy to be already Sodalists.

From time to time, especially on the principal feasts of Our Lady, the Senior Academy gave solemn literary sessions (a custom still in force to-day) for the good of souls and progress in polite letters.

Spread of Sodalities

Thanks to the zeal of the Jesuit Fathers, the idea of the Sodality spread over the greater part of Europe.

In the first class of remarkable founders and zealous directors shine resplendently Father Francis Coster, in Belgium and Germany; Father Edmund Auger, in France; the Venerable Father James Rem, in Bavaria; in Italy, Father Anthony Spinelli, who, in less than forty years, counted in different Religious Orders more than four hundred former members of his Sodality of Our Lady Immaculate; In Sicily Father Sebastian Cabarrasi, whose eminent sanctity has been highly praised by Fathers John Rho, James Riela, Sacchini and Jouvency. God often favored him with special graces. Every Saturday after the evening class, he used to gather the best of his scholars at Mary's feet, then made them pray in common and spoke to them, as only saints know how, of the dignity and mercy of the Queen of Heaven. This example was followed by many of his colleagues with astonishing results;

for example, in the space of one month, these nascent Sodalities gave forty-eight novices to different religious orders.[4]

In Sicily also Father Peter Villafrate, who had the joy of seeing as many as seven hundred of the members of his Sodality, called that *of Fervor,* enter the various novitiates of Sicily: an example which, after the death of the pious Religious, was followed by several thousand other Sodalists. Blessed Canisius started a Sodality in Fribourg, Blessed Campion at Prague, the celebrated Maldonatus at Pont-à-Mousson. Later on, Father Edward Scarisbrick, first preacher at the court of Queen Mary, and then chaplain to James II, managed to introduce it secretly into England.

Attention has just been called to the great number of Sodalists who, in Italy, passed from the world to the cloister. This phenomenon recurred everywhere, and the Sodalities of Mary have been justly surnamed nurseries of vocations. Let us give some statistics in corroboration.

In 1581, the College of Douai furnished the Society of Jesus with 30 novices; in 1594, it gave 11; in 1596, 12; in 1611, as many as 90 students begged admission into various Religious Orders, and of this number 24 entered the family of St. Ignatius. At Naples, 30 Religious vocations are found in 1582, and 21 in 1584. In the space of one year, the College of Rouen gave 20 novices to the Society and

[4] Alberti, *History of the Province of Sicily.*

10 to other Orders, and the one at Amiens, under the direction of Father James Bordier, presented more than 40. In 1611, Louvain had 800 Sodalists; 60 took the Religious habit. The same year, Avignon sent 45 of its students into different Religious communities. Antwerp gave 36 in 1612, and 60 in 1628. Now, with very few exceptions, all these aspirants to the Religious life were Sodalists. If this account were continued, it might easily be proved that the proportion was nearly as large in all the big Jesuit Colleges: at Paris, at Pont-à-Mousson, at Toulouse, at Lyons, at Rouen, at Palermo, on the banks of the Rhine, in Germany as well as in Poland.

As Father Letierce rightly remarks, this great number of vocations is not astonishing, the Divine seed falling from Heaven found souls prepared to receive it. Soon it developed into good desires, into generous aspirations; strengthened by an intelligent training, it was not long in bearing fruit. Hence the abundant harvest of Religious vocations, where all the Religious Orders came to gather their sheaves.[5]

Of the two hundred colleges of the Society about the year 1600, there was not a single one which did not have its Sodality of the Blessed Virgin. To-day the entire world is covered with a network of Sodalities. We reproduce a statement from the Archives of the *Prima Primaria* of the

[5] *Manual of the Children of Mary*, p. 62.

number of diplomas of affiliation which it has given since its foundation:

From the year 1584 to 17 May, 1824..	2,928
From 17 May, 1824, to 8 Dec., 1854...	4,027
From 8 Dec., 1854, to 8 Dec., 1904....	22,364
From 8 Dec., 1904, to 8 Dec., 1914....	10,917 [6]

Passing beyond the precincts of the Colleges, the Sodalities spread rapidly, as soon as Sixtus V opened their doors to all classes of society.[7] Men of every rank and condition were seen crowding to it; Priests and nobles, employees and employers, magistrates, soldiers, artists, merchants, apprentices, peasants. "What marvels," said Sacchini, "God graciously deigned to work by this means—reconciliations, relief of physical sufferings, defense of the oppressed, restoration of order and harmony in families! Success absolutely unhoped for induced them to multiply these very successes. The older Sodalists, with firmer and more formed characters, obtained results which surpassed those produced by the student Sodalities. The entire household, moreover, benefited, and the state as well, by the improvement of the head of the family: be-

[6] These numbers are from the Registers at Rome. They are, however, incomplete, as many as 10,000 Sodalities unfortunately not having been reported for entry on the books (Ughi, *Summarium Libri Statistici,* 1915).

[7] Bull of 5 Jan., 1587.

cause the whole of society profits by the perfection of the individual.[8]

Sodalities in Italy

The Sodalities at Naples

Everywhere Catholics rivaled each other in zeal. Flourishing Sodalities revived in Italy the faith of the early ages. Rome and Milan had several, and as early as 1613, Naples boasted of 18, 12 of which held their meetings at the College, 5 at the Professed House and 1 at the Novitiate.

At the College, let us note those of the philosophers, the students, the doctors and the lawyers. The Clerics' Sodality founded in 1611 by Father John Pavone, soon numbered 400 members, amongst whom were canons of the cathedral of Naples, Rectors, Abbots and Superiors of several monasteries, with a great number of Religious, lastly the Papal Nuncio and the Cardinal Archbishop, whose example was followed within the space of a few years by more than 120 Bishops; these prelates made it a duty to attend the meetings, as far as the obligations of their office permitted them to do so. Several Generals of Orders and 16 Cardinals in later years came from this Sodality. Before the death of its founder, it had branched out into 90 auxiliaries in the kingdom of Naples alone. This

[8] *Hist. of the Soc. of Jesus,* V. 7, no. 1.

fervent servant of Mary had also founded Sodalities for gardeners, for porters and for schoolmasters. The Cardinal Archbishop of Naples, surrounded by numerous prelates, presided at his funeral held in the presence of a wonderful throng of the faithful in 1637.

Among the young Priests who held their meetings at the Professed House there was a most favored group, the *Oblates,* who had devoted themselves in a closer manner to the service of Mary, so as to acquire the perfection of priestly virtues. Those parishes were indeed fortunate which were directed by such well trained pastors.

The nobles and the magistrates, moreover, assembled at the Professed House, and distributed every year the sum of 2,000 pieces of gold to the poor of the higher classes. In a different apartment, into a Sodality for them, the servants of these gentlemen were received. At the Novitiate, the reunions of the sailors and fishermen were held: these worthy fellows, who in 1613 numbered two hundred, were the admiration of the town for their correct life.[9]

In 1631, this same city of Naples had reason to rejoice at the devotedness of the Sodalists in a critical circumstance. An eruption of Vesuvius had alarmed all the surrounding country; no fewer than ten thousand fugitives invaded the Neapolitan city, imploring shelter and bread from the public

[9] Spinelli, *Maria Deipara,* XL. 13.

charity. The civil administration was at the last extremity. The Sodalities of Our Lady came to its rescue, and, among them all, that of the Immaculate Conception was remarkable for its work; it alone lodged and fed at its own expense, in the Hospital of St. Januarius without the walls, more than sixteen hundred of those in need.

The Sodality at Syracuse

At the time of a similar disaster, the Sodality of the Mortified, which Father Anthony Filippazzi directed at Syracuse, accomplished prodigies of charity.

Towards the last days of August, 1619, the Sicilian fleet, badly damaged in a naval battle, was forced to take refuge in the port of Syracuse. The ships were filled with sick and wounded, and there was no place in the town ready to receive them. In this extremity, Father Filippazzi proffered his own and his Sodality's services in aid of the unfortunate men. Under his direction, three vast hospitals constructed of timber were at once erected, where the sick having been brought ashore were installed. Then the Sodalists went about the town begging for mattresses, linen, bed clothes, food and remedies of all sorts; they nursed these poor wretches tenderly and performed for them all the duties of the most humble charity. Only a few died from their wounds, but these were surrounded by all the aids of religion; the others never ceased

loudly proclaiming that they owed their recovery, in a great measure, to the charitable Jesuit and his Sodalists.[10]

Later Sodalities in Naples

Towards the end of the XVIIth century, the whole town of Naples might well have admired a Sodality of simple workingmen, an auxiliary of St. Francis Hieronymo in his apostolic work. They were called the *Brothers of the Mission.* "It was like a holy legion, always at war with the demon, which under the orders of that admirable Director, advanced everywhere, summoning the idle to the sermon, grouping the hearers about the cross in the public squares, preaching by example penance and humility, and drawing from their very zeal the principle of their own progress." [11]

By means of the Sodality, it was easy to hold in your hand, so to speak, an entire city for the greatest profit of religion and the state. Here, for example, is how the different classes of society, at Messina, were divided into fifteen Sodalities.

The first, that of the rhetoricians and humanists, numbered a thousand members; the second, the nobles, founded in 1582, was under the patronage of the Annunciation: it looked after poor debtors; the master-workmen formed the third, called the Sodality of the Purification; the fourth, the So-

[10] Aguilera, II. 79.
[11] Delplace, p. 127.

dality of the Nativity of Our Lady, embraced the workingmen already skilled in their trade, and the fifth, under the same title, received the apprentices. The Sodality of the Visitation, the sixth, was composed of grammar students. The philosophers, the law students and the students of theology formed the seventh under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception; the tradesmen, in the eighth, honored Mary under the title of Immaculate; the ninth was for Priests, with the Visitation for patronal feast day; the tenth was *secret*. Its 33 members rivaled each other in fervor: their patroness was Our Lady of Piety. The beggars enrolled themselves in the eleventh; they deducted a tenth of the alms which had been given them to defray the expenses of their meetings. The Sodality of the Assumption, the twelfth, only received lawyers into its ranks; the little children flocked to the thirteenth: Mary at the Temple was their patroness. The fourteenth saw to the general community; it was also called the Sodality of the Nativity. Finally, the fifteenth, called the Sodality of the holy Conversation of Mary with Jesus, recruited in all ranks and all conditions.[12]

Under impulse of the Venerable Father Vincent Carrafa, the Sodality of the Nobles often presented to the great Neapolitan city signs of heroic virtues, which were unaccountable for without the special assistance of the Queen of Heaven.

[12] LETIERCE, 91.

Not long after Father Carrafa had taken up the direction of the Sodality, he fell very seriously ill and was despaired of by the doctors.

One evening, about five o'clock, when the Father was in this condition, as we are told with unaffected frankness by one of his biographers, a Brother, whom he knew very well, entered the room. Seeing him, the Father began heaving deep sighs and his face was expressive of the most violent sorrow. The Brother, astonished at so extraordinary a thing, most affectionately inquired what was wrong, and what was the cause of these tears and this grief? But the Father answered him vaguely, saying with great emotion: "May God forgive you! go away and leave me alone."

The Brother, suspecting that something extraordinary had occurred, had a still greater desire to know what was happening, and he began coaxing the Father to tell him in all confidence why he was weeping; and he begged so hard, that the Father, to get rid of him, promised to tell him later, requesting him to go away immediately for the time being.

The Brother went away, but failed not to return at the end of two hours. But, in spite of all his prayers and earnest entreaties, he could learn nothing from him.

The following morning, he came back, begged the Father to keep his promise, urged him strongly, declaring that he would never cease insisting and

would not leave before this satisfaction was given to him. At length, his importunity prevailed and under the seal of absolute secrecy, the Father began: "When you came into my room, the Queen of Heaven had already been here offering me either life or death and bidding me to choose between them. For my part, I confided to her care my life and death, assuring her that my one desire was to please her; that death would not be unwelcome were it not that I should leave the Sodality in a poorer condition than I should wish to do for her honor; that if it were for her glory, I did not refuse to live. While I was saying this, you unexpectedly arrived."

The Brother, so as to understand it all better, asked the Father whether he was really awake at the time, or whether it was a vision seen in sleep. "I was awake, without a doubt," he answered, and he added that he had previously had similar consolations.[13]

From that time on, the saintly Director's zeal knew no bounds. "God and my Sodality," he repeated incessantly: because in this world it was his only care. If his companions in the apostolate came to see him, he always greeted them with the words: "What news is there of the Sodality? Dear Father, are those gentlemen becoming saints?"

Every Tuesday, the Sodalists went to the Incur-

[13] Le Blanc, *Life of Fr. V. Carrafa*, II. 12.

able Hospital. It was a touching sight to see these gentlemen eager to render the poor wretches the humblest of services. To dress their wounds, to make their beds, to help the infirm, to console the dying, to bury the dead, all these things seemed to be mere pleasure to these fervent Christians, to judge from their serene and happy faces. On certain solemn days, they gave their beloved incurables a sumptuous banquet. The hospital was turned into a palace. The high bare walls were hung with tapestries and silks embroidered in gold; fine table cloths and napkins of the best quality, scented water for the fingers, silver plates, music during the feast, choice dishes and desserts of all sorts—nothing was lacking to entertain worthily the royal poverty of Jesus in his suffering members.

The convicts had their share of the good works of the Sodality. When the members heard that a band of them were to pass by on their way to prison, Father Carrafa and his noble Sodalists with cross borne before them and singing the litanies went forth to meet the prisoners, who were conducted to a great hall. There the gentlemen first washed the wretches' feet, then served them a sumptuous meal. After that the Father made them an impassioned address; a collection, which was always very generous, concluded the ceremony; the proceeds helped to release immediately the convicted debtors.

The zealous Director had a great love of splendor in the divine service; his Sodalists gave him very liberal donations indeed. One day, a very open handed member offered him fifteen hundred ducats! Another time he had need of a certain sum for altar decorations, so he mentioned it to one of the officers of the Sodality. He answered that he was likely to have difficulty in procuring it. "Indeed!" interrupted the Father, "has not the Great Mother (his customary title for Our Lady) the power of obtaining it for us?" That very day he was given an alms of three hundred crowns.

As for the interior life, there was nothing Father Carrafa did not do to keep it intense and generous in the hearts of his Sodalists.

The General Communions, adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament during the sinful sports of the carnival and on the seven principal feasts of the Blessed Virgin, and above all the Exercises of St. Ignatius which he gave them each year for eight days, reveal to us the secret of those prodigies of virtue, worthy of the most beautiful ages of Christianity.

But perhaps the most astonishing product of his zeal was what he called the *secret* Sodality. Other Sodalities of the same kind existed in several towns of France and Italy. In France, they were often called *Aa,* a conventional abbreviation of the word *assembly.* Apart from the spirit of fervor which was common to them all, each one had its own

exercises and its particular rules. That of Messina, for example, never admitted more than 45 members, of whom 12 were ecclesiastics and 33 laymen, of all classes of society, probably in memory of the 12 Apostles and the 33 years of Our Lord's life on earth.[14]

Father Carrafa's Sodality met every Friday at nightfall. The memory of the Passion of Our Saviour was then honored by prayer and penance. On this day, the holy Priest kept absolute silence, his mind entirely occupied with his evening meeting. If some one came to talk over matters with him, he used to answer simply: "Don't you know that there is secret Sodality to-day?" For two hours before the time of the meeting he meditated in the dark, locked in a little room. From there he emerged full of the spirit of God and thus communicated to the best of his Sodalists the flames of Divine love.

The hall was hung in mourning: on a little platform covered with a black cloth, there lay a statue of the Divine Master, around which were placed crowns of thorns. The meeting began by reading a passage from St. John Climacus on the austerities practised of old in the cloisters. Each Assistant put a crown of thorns on his brow and drew from an urn a little ticket specifying either a mortification to be done or a maxim for meditation. Then came the recitation of the Office of the Wounds of

[14] Aguilera, II. 53.

Our Lord; after which, any one who desired to do so, might accuse himself publicly of some fault and ask for a penance. Father Carrafa then spoke for a half hour on the sufferings of Our Redeemer, with that eloquence which only a passionate love can give. A long and severe discipline ended the pious exercises.[15]

Admirable humility of the saints! While the good Father was thus sanctifying the populous city of Naples, he considered himself far beneath his task and bewailed his unworthiness before God. When one of his brothers in religion tried to persuade him to moderate a little his ardor in his dealings with the Sodality, indulged at the risk of soon sinking beneath the work, he answered: "Oh! my dear Father, it is the very thing for which I hope above all else. Since I cannot lay down this duty of Director of the Sodality till death, it would be better for me to die, so as to occupy no longer a place which another would fill better than I!"

The Sodality of Nobles at Rome

The Sodality of the Roman Professed House, by itself alone, could boast after a century's existence of having seen more than 80 of its members raised to the dignity of the cardinalate, and, in 1690, it counted as members 28 Cardinals and 39 Archbishops and Bishops, giving a splendid example to a considerable number of Princes and other illus-

[15] Bartoli.

trious personages, who met regularly to the great edification of all the faithful.[16]

This Sodality, named Sodality of the Nobles, had been founded by the venerable Father Mastrilli, S.J. It took for its special work the mitigation of hatred and the extirpation of enmities, which were inveterate and intense in those Southern lands. For this purpose, the Sodalists were divided into bands, one for each of the sixteen quarters of Rome. If a dissension arose anywhere, the Sodalists, in accord with the parochial clergy, immediately exerted themselves to restore peace. They had a register, a golden book of charity, in which a secretary recorded the reconciliations wrought in the name of the Virgin Queen of Peace.

The Sodality of Nobles at Palermo

The historians of the Society have perpetuated the memory of a touching spectacle of a sort of procession of charity which another Sodality of Nobles, directed by Father Francis Raiato, used to give in the town of Palermo. In our half pagan cities, such demonstrations seem to-day to be mere sport or a carnival scene. At that time they appeared—what they were in reality—the triumph of Christian charity.

The Sodalists, all distinguished people, some even of the highest nobility, had resolved to visit the

[16] Crasset, *Abridged History of the Sodalities.*

prison in a body and give them a festive meal. For this purpose, then, they assembled on 16 August, 1618, at the Professed House.

From there, they marched in procession to the prison by the longest way. They went two by two, each holding by the handle a basket decorated with flowers and filled with choice dishes. The Priest Sodalists led the march; after them, came the Prefect of the Sodality, Peter Leyva, whose exalted feats of arms had won him the prestige of military glory; the officers came next, amongst whom was to be remarked the Duke of Montalto: as his infirmities rendered marching impossible for him, he was borne in a chair, but an open one, so that every one might see that he as well as the others was laden with charitable gifts. Then filed by the rest of the procession, in the rear of which was Father Raiato, he also carrying his basket.

They walked in silence, with eyes cast down, arousing on their way curiosity mixed with veneration. It was, in fact, the first time that the inhabitants of Palermo witnessed such a victory over human respect.

On reaching the prison, they considered it an honor to serve the prisoners with their own hands. So great was the abundance of the feast that the remnants lasted for three days.[17]

[17] Aguilera, II. 71.

Modern Sodalities at Rome

To-day, as in its glorious past, Rome sees the Sodalities of Our Lady flourishing under the direction of the Society of Jesus. Not to mention the *Prima Primaria,* the never failing trunk of the great tree of the Sodalities of Our Lady spread over the whole world, one must note particularly:

1. The Sodality of the "Scaletta"; its members are some of the students in the government schools, especially the pupils of the Ennio Quirino Visconti Lyceum, which was once the Roman College.

2. Next, the Sodality established in the Church of Our Lady of the Angels for the Students of the two neighboring Colleges, as well as for those of the technical schools situated in the same district.

3. The Sodality which has its center at the Latin American College in the Prati di Castello for the students in the government schools of this large district. As it is very prosperous, it is like a perpetual mission for its members and their families, thanks to the frequent instructions, to the solemn first Communions preceded by a several days' retreat, to the distribution of prizes for punctual attendance and merit, to the spread of good books from a circulating library.

4. A Sodality established at the German College, attended by the children in the parish.

5. The Sodality of the Massimo College, which has about 500 students. The good which comes of

it is great, important and lasting, for it is firmly established and rooted in a soil saturated through and through with piety and the supernatural.

6, 7 and 8. Finally, in the church of the Gesù, three Sodalities, one for nobles one for workingmen and one for tradesmen.

Sodalities in France

The page of the Sodality's history in France is not less charming.

Paris

The Sodality was first erected at the College of Clermont at Paris, probably by Father Leunis himself in 1569, and it caused the students who hastened in flocks to its ranks to make marvelous progress in piety. At the very time when it was the object of the jealous reproaches of Doctor Pelletier and of the University, it received among its members a thirteen-year-old child who was to render it immortally famous, the young Francis de Sales. During the six years that he was a member of the Sodality, he repeatedly filled the highest offices. It was at the College of Clermont, as is well known, that the saintly Sodalist owed to the protection of the Queen of Heaven the victory over a temptation to despair.

Here is what Francis Favre, his servant, declared in his first canonical examination for the beatification of his venerated master:

"I know that, about the year 1580, when for the continuance of his studies, the servant of God was sent to Paris by his father, who wished to place him at the College de Navarre, where the flower of the nobility studied, he, fearing the loss of his innocence, threw himself at his mother's feet and begged her to persuade his father to send him instead to the Jesuit College. The Saint knew it was a true seminary of all virtues, and added these beautiful words: 'It would be a greater pleasure for his parents to see him return a devout disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ, than a learned and elegant courtier.' I know that with the Jesuit Fathers in Paris, he went to Confession every week. He begged admission into the Sodality, where he gave such a splendid example that he was several times elected Prefect and Assistant, and he made admirable exhortations to the postulants.

"If he was neither at home nor at the college, he might be found in some church or monastery.

"Two years later, he was assailed by a cruel temptation to despair; he believed he was damned, and the thought caused a dreadful jaundice to break out over his whole body; the doctors despaired of his recovery, as he despaired of his salvation.

"In this state, he entered the church of St. Etienne-des-Prés, where he often went to pray before a statue of the Blessed Virgin. There he saw the *Memorare* of St. Bernard fastened to the wall and breaking into tears began to recite it. He

made a vow of perpetual virginity, and, at that very instant, hope reentered his soul and health returned to his body. As a proof of his gratitude to the Mother of God, he made it an obligation to recite the rosary every day of his life. I have learned that he never failed to do this." [18]

As regards the most strictly reformed Religious houses, such as the Carthusians, Capuchins and Minors, an ancient chronicler says it is perfectly true that the University of Paris was their common seminary. In this respect the Sodality of Our Lady, established there, was of the greatest advantage: in this Sodality a very large number of young students, along with many prelates, doctors, judges, lawyers and tradesmen devoted themselves to the service of the Mother of God. The exhortations were usually given by one or other of the great theologians; the meditations, penances, Confessions and Communions were frequent. These devotions were easily fostered by High Masses and Vespers with music and singing and with great solemnity on Sundays and festivals; the Kings Charles IX and Henry III, Queens, Princes, Princesses, Bishops, and lords of the court of Parliament did not deem the little chapel of this large College unworthy of their esteem.[19]

[18] Unpublished details of the life of St. Francis de Sales, from the evidence of his servant.

[19] Carayon, *Unpublished Documents Concerning the Society of Jesus,* Vol. I.

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Similarly, Father Edmund Auger, the formidable adversary of the Calvinists, instituted the Penitents of the Annunciation, "with the hope of seeing in this kingdom, through the ardent intercession of the most holy Virgin, all heresies, errors and false opinions which ravage and trouble it, overthrown and brought to naught." Here is an extract from the rules: No member should fail to hear Mass every day; each one should see that God should not be offended in his family; he should say every day the rosary of Our Lady or at least a decade of it; he must visit the prisoners, for whom he should have four Masses said, and to whom he himself should preach or have others do it; he should console them and if there are any condemned to death, he should not leave them before the poor wretches go forth to execution. The rules are the same for the hospitals.[20]

Another Sodality established at the Jesuit Novitiate, in the Faubourg St. Germain, counted among its members the princes Ferdinand and Charles of Lorraine. But the domestics had their reunions as well as the rich and powerful of the time, "so that they too might have the opportunity of performing the same exercises in honor of the Virgin Mary," says an ancient document, "instead of idly waiting in attendance on their masters during the two hours' duration of the latters' meeting."

At all times Paris has seen flocking within its

[20] DELPLACE, 28.

walls bands of those poor children who come from the remotest parts of the provinces, seeking in the capital means to earn their daily bread, and they meet more often than not with the greatest misery. The Sodalists devoted themselves to relieve their distress.

At the end of the XVIth century, there chanced to be in Paris, completing his studies, a young Sodalist from Rheims, Etienne Joly. At the sight of these little vagabonds whom hunger and idleness exposed to the winds of all the vices, his heart was touched; he gathered them together, fed them, taught them and supplied their most urgent needs. At his death, this inheritance of charity passed into the hands of another child of Mary, Mr. Hélyot. While he gathered these forsaken youths off the streets of the great city, his wife, a worthy rival of his virtues, on her part collected the homeless girls. After them, a holy Priest, Francis du Breuil de Pontbriand, took this interesting adopted family under his paternal care and worked for them until he breathed his last. Lastly, the venerable John Baptist de Salignac Fénelon succeeded him as director of the great work, until his martyrdom, in 1793.

The Seminary for the Foreign Missions

Catholic France prides itself justly on the admirable institution of the Seminary for the Foreign

Missions. But this institution owes its first members to the Sodality.

Father Alexander de Rhodes, after having worked some time at Goa, went to Cochin-China and to Tonkin, the scene for nearly thirty years of his immense labors. When he first felt old age creeping upon him, he decided to come back to Europe to ask for a sufficient number of workers to complete the spiritual conquest of his kingdom. Bidden by Innocent X and by his Superiors to preach a crusade in France, he was cordially welcomed by all classes of society. The venerable missionary, by his presence and his discourses, animated a great number of Priests with his zeal. Among these new apostles, three were chosen from the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin to be anointed Bishops of Heliopolis, of Berythus and of Metellopolis. The Sodality which was to be the germ of the Foreign Missions was directed by Father Bagot, a Jesuit.[21]

Father John Bagot was born at Rennes in 1590, and died at Paris in 1664, after fifty-five years of religious life. So great was his reputation for learning and holiness, that Louis XIII chose him for Confessor. But the man of God, whose favorite maxim was, *Love to be unknown and to be considered nothing,* succeeded by earnest entreaty in persuading the king to allow him to return to the obscurity of community life. From that time until his death, he took charge of the Sodality of the

[21] Fevre, *Hist. of the Church,* XXXVIII. 3.

Blessed Virgin, in which under his direction so many souls of eminent virtue were formed, men of the world, Priests, Religious, Prelates and missionaries.

Adrian Launay says that Father de Rhodes came to Europe to ask the Sovereign Pontiff for Bishops for Tonkin and Cochin-China. . . . Innocent X wished to consecrate Father de Rhodes. Faithful to the spirit of his vocation, the humble priest refused the honor. . . . The Pope did not insist, and ordered him to look for candidates who could be made Bishops and be sent to Eastern Asia.

In 1653, Father de Rhodes, who had fruitlessly searched through Italy, Piedmont and the Catholic part of Switzerland, came to Paris, still hunting for Bishops, in obedience to the order he had received from the Sovereign Pontiff. During Father de Rhodes' stay in this city, he was brought one day by Father Bagot to a meeting of a small association of which the latter was Director, a group placed, in a special manner, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

Father de Rhodes told the company of the needs of the missions in the Far East and the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Some who were deeply moved by the words of the venerable Priest, began to wonder if God was not calling them to be the instruments of the Holy See. After several days of reflection, they deter-

mined to consecrate themselves to the missions.[22]

We do not wish to claim for Father de Rhodes all the glory of having been the founder or one of the founders of the Society of Foreign Missions—an honor which the author whom we have quoted refuses him—because the venerable missionary never had the intention of founding an apostolic or religious congregation, and had come to Europe merely to obtain Bishops for Annam, and had been obliged to set off again with the regret of having failed. We think, however, that Father de Rhodes' part is too lightly estimated in the words: "All that one can say, is that the founders and first Apostolic Vicars of the Foreign Missions became acquainted with the needs of the missions in the Far East through Father de Rhodes."

In fact, the members who made up the young Society at the time when it was definitely founded and officially recognized (1663), were former Jesuit students and belonged to the *Association of Good Friends*. These *Good Friends* were all members of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, established for the day-scholars of the College of Clermont. Thus strictly united, they formed a kind of Sodality within a Sodality, the élite amid the élite.

In the number of these fervent Sodalists, was counted Francis de Montmorency, the first Bishop of Québec; de Meurs, first Superior of the Foreign Missions at Paris; Jogues, martyred in Canada;

[22] *General History of the Society of Foreign Missions*, I. 1.

the famous Archdeacon of Evreux, Henry Boudon, and that other Superior of the Foreign Missions, Fermanel, whom the prayers and example of Henry Boudon had won for the apostolate. "These meetings of young men," Boudon wrote, "have been like a little spring which has grown to a large river from the number of Bishops and Vicars Apostolic that have been chosen from their midst for the east and the west. It was from this number that were taken the Bishops for Siam, for China and for Canada, to be as fathers to them. Thus originated the Seminary of the Foreign Missions in Paris which spreads the sweet odor of the Gospel teachings, and is the good odor of Jesus Christ."

Among the chosen souls whom Father Bagot directed, Boudon deserved a place of honor. As a simple Sodalist in the College at Rouen, he had gathered the most fervent of his school-fellows into a sort of court of Mary. A marvelous fervor reigned in this new Cenacle, where the young initiates rivaled each other in holy practices in honor of the Queen of Heaven.

He himself tells us that they lived together in one house where they were boarders. There, they had reserved a little oratory for themselves, where they assembled every day to render homage to their amiable Sovereign, using the little money that they received from their parents to decorate her images with flowers and burning incense and lighted candles. They argued often who should give her the

most magnificent names; it was the subject of their conversation during their meals, and all the charm of their recreation; they even spent a part of the night in such discussions and made each other sacred challenges, as it were, as to who should render her the greatest honors. On holidays it was their dearest delight to visit the churches dedicated to Mary; it is said they often made these pilgrimages barefooted. They prepared themselves for the feasts of Our Lady by long fasts and sometimes spent the whole night in meditating on her incomparable excellence. It was a pleasure to see the eagerness with which they hastened to the College gate to reach the Sodality chapel. From three or four o'clock in the morning they were at their post, and in patient prayer waited for the door to be opened.

But it is not possible to merely enumerate the ingeniousness of their love. They had parchment record books, where they wrote, several even with their blood, that they were Our Lady's slaves, and that they had given her all their actions. Some had written that they would defend the Immaculate Conception even by death; every day they recited the Office.[23]

Lyons

In the city of Lyons alone there were, two centuries ago, as many as eleven Sodalities, four of

[23] *God Alone, or the Holy Slavery to the Mother of God.*

which were for workingmen. On 28 May, 1679, the Rector of the Jesuit College was able to address the aldermen of the city in these words: "It is indeed a very special pleasure for us to have the task of instructing, every Sunday, workingmen, great and small, day-laborers . . . in such great numbers that our college, though famous for its size, is too small to contain them." Ten years later, he added: "In this college, almost 2000 of your children are educated in the classics; nearly 4000 Sodalists are instructed in piety."

Avignon

Avignon possessed likewise a large number of Sodalities.[24] In the XVIIIth century they included a total of 2000 members, divided into nine centers.

It was at the request of the Sodalists of this town, that Father Poiré wrote a celebrated work on Our Lady, as he tells us in the Dedication of his book. In his address to Mary, the pious author says: "Dost thou not remember how many times thy well beloved children, the most honorable members of the great Sodality which is established in the noble town of Avignon, and is one of the most illustrious Sodalities in France, protested that these conferences which I gave for their sake, were no longer mine, but theirs, and that they were re-

[24] Chossat, *The Jesuits and Their Works at Avignon,* Chap. 7 and 19.

sponsible for the confusion which I had reason to dread, if I committed them to print?"

Aix

The Annals of the College of Aix mention twelve Sodalities established in this town (citizens, peasants, Priests, etc.), seven of which were in activity at the same time (1663). They did the greatest good in the town, as is proved by the following passage from a petition addressed to the magistrates of the town: "The zeal and charity of the Fathers for the salvation of souls have prompted them to found seven different Sodalities. . . . So great is the consequence of this work that there is no one who does not recognize its spiritual profit and advantage to the greater number of the inhabitants of the town, and principally to the workingmen, the apprentices, the tradesmen and the clerks employed in the works of the court, and also to the peasants."

Rennes and Other Cities

Rennes had its men's Sodalities (gentlemen, tradesmen, workingmen); in Dijon there were five established at the college de Godrans for students, gentlemen, Priests, writers, workingmen.

A little town such as Pontarlier had as many as two.

At Marseilles, the Sodality of Nobles had a wide influence. The day of its patronal feast, the Im-

maculte Conception, it sent an invitation to the municipality which the latter was most pleased to accept. "On 8 December, 1728," says the Ceremonial of the town-hall of Marseilles, "the aldermen went, according to their custom, to hear Mass and a sermon with the Sodality of St. Jaume, founded by the Jesuits. The Prefect and two officers of the Sodality came to the town hall to accompany the magistrates. On the preceding day, the Father Director of the Sodality, the Prefect and the two Assistants had come to extend the invitation. The aldermen carried the canopy, with the two chief captains of the district." [25]

Rouen

There flourished at Rouen a Sodality which is worthy in more than one respect to attract our attention.

We read in the *Religious Week* of Rouen of the year 1884, that on 22 February in the year 1762, there perished in that city a work which during an existence of more than a century and a half had been, for its members and the unfortunate ones it aided, a source of untold blessings.

The Parliament of Normandy, infected with Jansenism and with so called Philosophy, had just suppressed all the Jesuit foundations within its jurisdiction. This act dealt a fatal blow likewise to the works which were founded by the Fathers

[25] Archives of the Prefecture of Marseilles.

in the interest of religion and for the success of which they were working. Among the chief of these achievements was the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, established in the College for the gentlemen of the town. The last meeting was held on 2 February, 1762.

There were at the College in Rouen three Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin, each adapted to the spiritual needs of a different class of society.

The first, that of the scholars, was made up exclusively of a certain number of the College students.

The second, for workingmen, gathered together a choice band of those who wished to honor the Blessed Virgin in a very special manner and to procure her protection.

The third was reserved for the gentlemen of the town. Into it were received nobles, magistrates, chief citizens and the graduates of the college, who had previously belonged to the Students' Sodality.

Each Sodality had its own Chapel in the College, its private meetings, its peculiar organization, its own works, its own practices and its director.

On the list of eminent Priests who directed the Gentlemen's Sodality at Rouen, we find the name of Father Claude de Lidelle, who was the professor of the great Corneille. This Father had spent the last years of his life in completing several works, of which the most important was the *Theology of the Saints* in two folio volumes. Before sending it

to the press, the aged Professor, who, despite the coldness of old age, had ever loved his former pupil with the fondness of a father and a friend, wished to inform Corneille of his work. Corneille, whose esteem and gratitude towards the teacher of his childhood had not been diminished by the splendor of his success, as yet without rival, wanted to give him a lasting testimony of his admiration and grateful love. He wrote Father de Lidelle an eloquent letter, which was published in 1668 at the beginning of the work.

Among the admirable works which the Gentlemen's Sodality accomplished, we will only mention the exterior works of charity.

An executive committee, made up of the leading Sodalists, had charge of the distribution of alms. It met every Sunday under the presidency of the Director. That help might be given to the really needy and that it might not become an encouragement to idleness, a list of the poor was made in which was stated their age, their dwelling, their occupation, the number of their children, etc.

A distribution was made once a week on a fixed day at the meeting place of the Sodality. Other assistance, especially to the poor of the better classes, was brought to their lodgings by some of the Sodalists, who always tried, while easing the corporal miseries of the sufferers, to attend to the needs of their souls by charitable advice and words of consolation. This sort of, so to speak, secret

alms, amounted yearly to 300 or 400 pounds, but it rose to unexpected proportions on the eve of the suppression of the Sodality (1761) when it reached 705 pounds. It was like a protest against the wickedness of the blow which was about to be dealt against it.

The third class of wretches who were assisted by the Sodalists was the prisoners. The prison gates were opened to them, and every week a few went, far less to attend to the urgent necessities of life than to awaken in the souls of the unhappy sinners, whom justice had branded and society had rejected from its midst, sentiments of resignation and of repentance. When these criminals saw men, often of high rank, descending into their dungeons, coming out of the purest intention of charity, pitying their situation and treating them like brothers, they lent a willing ear to them and returned with all sincerity to God.

In a word, it was to the Sodalities of Our Lady, according to Cardinal de Bausset, that France owed the maintenance of the fervent Catholic spirit at home, and to them also must be attributed her apostolate and her Missions in the Far East, in China, in Egypt, in Greece, as well as among the remotest barbarous peoples and tribes of Africa and the New World.

"In the principal commercial towns," he adds, "as is still fresh in the minds of many, there never was more order and peace, more honesty in busi-

ness, less bankruptcy and less depravity, than when the Sodalities existed: the Jesuits knew how to link the Sodalities with all professions and with all social institutions; they helped to maintain among all classes and conditions that regularity of manners, that spirit of subordination, that prudent economy, which keeps peace and harmony in families and makes the prosperity of empires." [26]

St. Acheul

We must add that the friendly relations existing between the Sodality and the St. Vincent de Paul Society are noticed by every one. The greater part of the works of charity, held in high esteem among the members of the Conferences, have always been one of the daily regulations in the family of Mary. For example, the Sodality founded at St. Acheul by Father de Bussy, in 1821, seems to have sketched in its main outlines the program that ten years later the founders of the Conference adopted for their nascent work.

The object of the Charity Section of the Sodality was to bring spiritual and temporal aid to the poor in their homes, to the sick in the hospital and to the prisoners. It had a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer and several heads of bands. It was consecrated in a special manner to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and had for its patrons St. Francis Xavier and St. Vincent de Paul.

[26] Bausset, *History of Fénelon*, I.

On Wednesday, they visited the hospital, and on Saturday the poor families and the prisons. All the members of the Section, arranged by order of weeks, carefully gathered up every day the remains of dessert, fruit, scattered sheets of paper, useless copies and old copy-books . . . it was a help to the resources of generosity. Sodalists alone were candidates, and these chosen candidates had to be proved worthy of the honor. To gather up the remains in the refectory, to accompany members of the Section to the hospital, to try to console the sick, to instruct them in their duties and to bring them back to God, such was their initiation.[27]

Caen

The above details suffice to give an idea of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin in France: it is not their history. That history is still to be written; it will be exceedingly interesting and, what is more, very real. It will teach the right way to "reach the masses," and successful means to interest the rich in behalf of employees. It will show the eminently practical and beneficial social movement that the Jesuits of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries exercised everywhere in favor of the working classes, by means of the Sodalities for gentlemen, for merchants and for workingmen, which it was customary for the Fathers to establish wherever there was a community.

[27] L. DE CHAZOURNES, *Life of Father Joseph Barelle*, I. 88.

What this complete history would be, might be imagined by reading a simple monograph, recently published by Father Henry Fouqueray S.J. in the 5 January, 1903, number of the *Etudes: A Social Work of the XVIIIth Century.* This article was printed in pamphlet form by the publishers. Below is reproduced the portion of the sketch which treats directly of our subject: the part played by the Society of Jesus in the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin. It is about the Gentlemen's Sodality directed by the Jesuits at Caen at the beginning of the XVIIIth century. The following letter, preserved in a manuscript of the city library, is written by a Father of that town—undoubtedly the Director of the Sodality—in answer to one of his fellow Jesuits who had asked for information concerning the charitable works customary among the Sodalists.

"Reverend Father,

". . . I may say that the Sodality has no fixed rules for the exercise of works of mercy, but merely the few following customs which are observed with edification:

"In the first place, these gentlemen have collected among themselves a common fund from which they make loans without interest to poor workingmen, tradesmen and others, and in this way help them to remain in their profession or to resume it if poverty has forced them to abandon it. So as not to be deceived, they take care to exact securities from

the borrowers, to ascertain by inquiries, which are prudently and kindly made, that the persons are in need, that there is reason to hope they will take advantage by their industry and their work of the help given them and prepare to return little by little that which they received all at once. The gentlemen avoid as much as possible giving them money in cash, because thus they are apt to spend it uselessly. The Sodalists strive, hand in hand with them, to buy them the things which are necessary for their calling, such as tools, woolen goods, wood, leather, thread, horses, cattle, etc., etc. They present to the secretary a kind of petition addressed to the gentlemen of the Sodality. The Father appoints three commissioners whose names are written below the petition for the examination. This council of three, consisting ordinarily of an ecclesiastic, a married man and a young man, sometimes one group, sometimes another, make the minutest inquiries with the greatest possible secrecy, so as not to hurt the feelings of those whom they wish to help. Then they write at the foot of the petition their signed opinion. Thereupon the Father, after having himself examined the affair with care, tells the secretary in accordance with the commissioners' advice what should be done; and if the petition is granted, the secretary binds the petitioner to the contract that his security will not be returned to him until he has completed the payment of the sum

loaned. This, Reverend Father, is the first practice of the Gentlemen's Sodality.

"The second consists in visiting every week, from the feast of All Saints till the first days of May, all the poor in the six parishes of the six suburbs, where there are not sufficient rich people to help them. Each Pastor sends to the Father Director an inventory of all his poor with their addresses. The Father subdivides the catalogue into smaller lists, the number of which is greater or less according to the number of poor in the parish; the lists are distributed at the first of each month among gentlemen of the Sodality, who form into bands of three, an ecclesiastic, a married man and a young man, and they choose a day to make their first visit together to their poor; the following Sunday after Vespers, they make a report, before all the Sodalists assembled, of the miseries of the poor whom they have visited. Then they decide what each of them must receive to enable him to subsist, and if the Sodalists intrusted with the list in question can themselves bear the expense, they do it with pleasure; if this is not possible, it is not an uncommon occurrence, nay, rather it is the custom, to take from the common Sodality fund what is necessary to meet the requirements of those on the list. You ask us what is given to the poor in these visits? Bread, linen, beds, so as to separate persons of the same family and in this way prevent great disorder. But the principal advan-

tage regards the spiritual works. They console the poor, and exhort them to patience and to frequent use of the Sacraments; they instruct the children in their parents' presence; they sometimes discover secret or scandalous dissensions which they redress with the aid of the pastors; they settle disputes, etc.

"As a third practice, the Sodalists take poor but industrious boys with whom they have become acquainted by visiting the families, and they have these boys taught some trade, each according to his bent and talents. This they do in three ways: either in a contest, choosing those who know their Christian doctrine the best (which does not fail to induce those who aspire to the honor to pay attention); or if there is a tie, they draw lots; or, in the case of a large family of children, they choose the child who promises to be the most successful. When the choice has been made in one of these three ways, the Father appoints three gentlemen of the Sodality to make terms with a teacher and to look after the affair until the term of apprenticeship is completed; after this, charity induces the three gentlemen to protect their pupil and to help him to get settled.

"Fourthly, we generally find that the best way to help the poor who are in good health is to make them work by providing them with the necessary advances which they cannot make themselves. They are well paid for their pains; they are forced

to abandon idleness; they are spared the shame of begging; and their work, from the market which some virtuous and clever people make for it, sometimes brings considerable profit. This reacts to the good of the poor and makes it possible for the good work to be continued and preserved, when it pleases the Lord to give it His blessing.

"The fifth practice is the care of the sick poor of the six parishes in the suburbs. During the whole course of their sickness, sheets, shirts and other necessary linen are lent to them, and the food and medicines needed for their recovery are procured for them. This is done very systematically. In each parish a linen store-house is organized, which is run by some devoted persons, who undertake to care for the linen, to send it to the sick and to reclaim it after the sickness; for the maintenance of these particular store-houses, there is a main one in the city also, intrusted to some virtuous person, who voluntarily devotes herself to such a good work. Seven gentlemen are appointed from time to time to visit the seven store-houses and give an account of their condition to the Sodality; and when the linen which has been used for the sick is worn out, it is given to poor mothers for swaddling clothes and clean garments for their little children, or it is made into lint used in bandaging those afflicted with ulcers. To the latter task many of our gentlemen of noble birth and great virtue have devoted themselves for several years.

"The sixth practice of the Sodality produces a spiritual benefit all the more solid because it lasts with some often until death. This is a yearly retreat at Christmas, for twenty-five poor girls or women, chosen by the gentlemen of the Sodality, who in their visits pick out those who need it the most. They select four or five from each parish, and so as to spread this benefit among more people, nine years must intervene before a person may be chosen a second time. There is another similar consideration in the choice, too, namely to gain the advantage for two classes of persons: for the aged, to prepare them for death by a good General Confession, and for the younger women, who because of their temperament and past conduct are most in need of such aid.

"Seventhly, the poor in the prisons have not escaped the charity of the Sodality. It has a separate supply of linen for their special benefit, for those in good health, as well as for the sick, so that the healthy prisoners have a change of clothes every week or fortnight according to the season. The Sodalists take care that the soiled garments are washed without expense to the prisoners. When the poor prisoners are sick, they have in addition the other necessary linen like that lent to the poor in the suburbs and, like the latter, they are provided with medical care, necessary remedies and food. Many persons, not members of the Sodality, have joined those who belong to it in sending soup

daily to the prisons. Also, it is not hard to find charitable lawyers among our Sodalists. A few years ago the Sodality presented the prisoners with the *Lives of the Saints,* with the seal of the Sodality on it, so as to induce them to keep the book more carefully. Every day, after prayers in common, they read the life of the Saint of the day, and this reading is very profitable for them.

"The zeal of the Sodality extends still further to the Missions, foreign as well as home. They contribute to both according to their means.

"I hope, Reverend Father, that the details which you wished me to give you, will according to your intentions, be for the glory of God."

Thus at the beginning of the XVIIIth century, we see the following charities at work in one of the Sodalities, under the direction and by the evident initiative of the Jesuits of Caen.

1. Loans on security, granted on the most perfect conditions;

2. The work of the training of apprentices;

3. Assistance of the poor by setting them to work, a great question of the XIXth and XXth centuries;

4. Dispensaries: food, medicines and medical consultation given free of charge;

5. The prison work;

6. The regular visiting of the poor, relieving them by alms in the form of money and linen; and this with a perfection unattained perhaps even by the

Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, efficient as they are: in fact, we do not think the latter have linen supplies in needy parishes.

"With this letter," adds Father Fouqueray, "and in the same collection we found a number of documents relating to the Gentlemen's Sodality. They will enable us to judge from actual facts the progress of the beautiful Christian and social enterprise.

"The above letter was dated in the month of August, 1720. The works which it enumerates had been determined upon and commenced already twenty-five years before. It is indeed to the extraordinary and general assembly of the gentlemen of the Sodality held on 29 November, 1699, in the Chapel under the presidency of Father Kergariou, that must be traced not the first idea, but the complete and detailed plan of this entire charitable organization.

"After the recitation of the *Veni Creator* and some customary prayers to implore the aid of the Holy Ghost through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, these gentlemen state that the number and the distress of the poor is increasing from day to day, and that since we have always devoted ourselves to the poor of the suburbs, whose less generally known sufferings have been the last to be assuaged, the moment seems to have come to make a common fund of money to be used solely for their relief and sustenance." The letter told us but little

about the important question of this relief bureau. Let us see the gentlemen's plans with regard to it.

"This fund shall, first of all, be composed of the alms which gentlemen of the Sodality shall give for this purpose, each according to his devotion and to the sentiments of compassion with which all true Sodalists should be inspired at the sight of the extreme need of these poor souls.

"To receive the money and to take charge of the special fund and apply it to the uses for which it should be employed, a receiver and an under-receiver were chosen, who were to keep a very exact account of the sums received and then of the disposal of the money.

"In order that the gentlemen of the Sodality who give this sort of alms may reap all the fruit and merit before God, the said receivers and under-receivers shall inviolably keep the secret which must be kept in such transactions, as is prescribed by the articles that have already been determined on for the exercise of works of charity.

"That those outside may not be deprived absolutely of sharing in the good works of the Sodality, some day the fund may be increased by alms added to it in the future, by charitable persons not members of the Sodality.

"In the same meeting, it was formally decided that this fund of extraordinary donations, which might one day become considerable, should be used solely for making loans to the poor and especially

to those of the suburbs, for the purpose of aiding them to continue their business, to continue in their former occupations and to give those who were old enough to earn their living the opportunity of learning some trade.

"Two months later, 24 January, 1700, at another general meeting, it was reported that the fund allotted for the assistance of laborers out of work had already increased to the amount of one hundred and fifty pounds. It was therefore expedient to commence making use of it. In the first place, the gentlemen felt it an obligation to find out for themselves the misery of the suburban poor, and they decided that the best way to obtain this information was to impose upon themselves the task of paying the poor visits from time to time. On this occasion some one remarked that on such visits they were sure to come upon certain needy persons, who, though they lack neither work nor the proper implements with which to carry on their trade . . . suffer from ill health, and the lack of the necessary ability of mind and of body . . . and that it was the duty of the gentlemen of the Sodality to strive to relieve the latter also, without, however, subtracting anything from what they had intended to do for the former. But charity is not disconcerted at such trifles. Therefore the gentlemen will seek the neediest poor in the six parishes of the suburbs. On these visits the Sodalists will give them alms from their own means, or they will

exert their influence to obtain assistance for the poor from other charitable people, or will appropriate for their use both the money slipped secretly into the poor box and the proceeds of the collections taken up at the Chapel door."

The generosity of the members of the Sodality and that of outside friends enabled the Sodality to meet the expenses caused by these two good works. There is still extant a secret account of the donations intended for loans. Over against the name of the donor appears the amount of his alms. On one date Mr. de Dampierre is entered for twenty-eight pounds, on another Mr. de Benonville for fourteen pounds, then again Mr. de Montcanisy for forty-two pounds, etc. . . . Rev. Father Kergariou often contributed a large share: here sixty-seven pounds, there a hundred and six pounds, elsewhere a hundred and thirty-two. . . . Doubtless these were the alms that his zeal had obtained from pious persons desirous of contributing to the charitable works of the Sodality of which they were not members. Already by February, 1701, the total of this revenue was nine hundred and eleven pounds; it rose to nine hundred and sixty-six pounds two years later.[28]

The money was never squandered. That these gentlemen knew how to invest it well, may be

[28] At the beginning of the eighteenth century a pound was equivalent to 1 franc 80, about 38 cents. (BALLY, *Financial History of France,* II. 298.)

proved by a deed of 1 Oct., 1706. On this date, the prioress, subprioress and the trustee of the nursing sisters in the hospital of Caen "acknowledge that they have sold and handed over to the gentlemen of the Sodality erected in the Royal College of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers at Caen under the title of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin . . . the sum of a hundred pounds at five per cent interest, payable yearly in this town . . . for the sum of two thousand pounds, now paid in ready money, which proceeds the said gentlemen of the Sodality declare came from alms which have been presented to aid them in their works of charity. . . ."

Two thousand pounds spent in charities! A stupendous sum, if one considers the value of money at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Moreover, this could not have been the entire wealth of the Sodality; doubtless more money was invested elsewhere, and the Sodality surely kept enough ready money to meet current expenses.

Not only were the funds securely deposited, but were also, according to the decision of the General Assembly, most prudently disposed of and loans were never made without exacting securities. The Sodalists had agreed to lend only to good living people and neither drunkards nor debauchees. The letter has already given us information on the subject; all requests for pecuniary aid were made in writing, then inquiries were made, the conclusions

of which, also committed to paper, were signed by the Sodalists in charge.

Better still, the curious manuscript of the library of Caen bears witness to the exercise of several other works of mercy through the medium of this same Sodality, an unquestionable proof of its resources and its social activity, things which the letter of the 15th of August, 1720, passed over in silence.

First of all, the 16th article of the resolution of 29 November, 1699, informs us that the gentlemen did not forget the poor, young and old, "whom they shall find unable to earn their living by any work"; it was decided that the Sodalists should zealously and tirelessly strive to place such people in the hospitals.

Further, on page 5 of the same document, we read in the handwriting of the treasurer: "On Saturday, 12 December, 1705, Rev. Father Kergariou and Mr. de Montcanisy put into my hands three hundred pounds from Mrs. de Hermanville, who gave this sum for the release of five prisoners in jail for civil causes or for debt."

This donation was easily spent. There follow in fact a certain number of remarks like these: On 4 January, 1706, James Mirey, imprisoned for a hundred and fifty pounds, the residue of a three-hundred-pound fine for illicit salt-trade . . . was released . . . partly by means of the sum of seventy pounds which was supplied him from the

above mentioned fund. On 24 December, 1705, James, a carpenter, eleven months a prisoner for taxes on selling drink retail; and Pasquet, prisoner since last 14 September for the price of salt bought in the salt store, were released for fifty and sixty pounds respectively, in accordance with the warrant of Mr. Foucault, State judge, of the said day, at the time of his visit," etc., etc.

Are not these book-keeping accounts, jejune though they be, very eloquent? Were it merely a question of a transient donation and one particular act, is it not evident that this charitable industry must have been inspired in these gentlemen by one or other of their other works, the visits to the poor, for example, or the work among the prisoners? In their relations with these unfortunate wretches, the Father Director and his sodalists must have found some whose capital crime was penury and their deliverance was the more urgent because their imprisonment increased the need of their families. It sufficed to interest some charitable person in their plight. It is indeed an art to discover poverty and to relieve it. It must be admitted that these gentlemen were past masters in it.

Was it not under the inspiration of this beneficent art that they knew how to extend far and wide for the greatest advantage of souls the assistance of their pious generosity? The letter of 1720 mentions retreats for women and the aid given to Missions, foreign as well as home. It says noth-

ing of another spiritual work of mercy of supreme value, and much fostered by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus in the seventeenth century, namely instruction in Christian Doctrine. This work too was encouraged and supported, in the poor parishes of Caen, by the subsidies and self-sacrifice of the Gentlemen's Sodality of the town. This we can positively affirm, thanks to a paper, unauthentic, it is true, but dated and very accurate: it is the rough draft of an authentic act in which only some proper names have been omitted and of which the following are the most important passages:

"We, prioress, subprioress . . . acknowledge that we have sold and committed to the gentlemen of the Sodality—represented by Mr. de Lavalley de la Cardonnière, Priest, Prefect,—Morin, esquire, and Montcanisy, Vicar of Désert, Assistants,—Lecoq, lord of Boscq, King's councilor from the town of Caen, and Poutrel, lord of Argences, at present receivers and acceptors . . . the sum of thirty-five pounds eight cents at five per cent interest payable in this town of Caen . . . the said income settled upon the sum of seven hundred and eight pounds paid to us in cash, which the said gentlemen have declared accrued from alms presented to them, to be at interest which will amount every 3 years to a hundred and six pounds, to be used as follows: a hundred pounds for the prize which will be offered at the general Catechism competition, which will be held, according to the regulation of

the 25th of December, 1708, every three years, for the poor children, boys and girls of the six parishes of the suburbs of this city . . . and of the six pounds and four cents left, forty-one cents and four coppers were to be used to buy catechisms for the diocese, some statues and some rosaries to be distributed by the clergy, who will teach Christian Doctrine privately each in the said parishes of the suburbs."

What good and practical things are written in this old document! Is it not true that this custom of a contest and prizes for Christian Doctrine among the children of several parishes of the same city is one which is much neglected in our days? And yet, what an admirable means of emulation, profitable not only to the children themselves but to their parents!

Sodalities in Germany

The wonders of zeal and of charity which the Sodalities accomplished in France and in Italy, they also performed in all the other countries in which they were able to take root.

In Germany, the Sodality was in very truth the bulwark of the faith. To it Trèves and Würzburg owe their triumph. All Bavaria rallied to its standard; more than thirty thousand men gave their names and saved the faith of their country. Alsace and Fribourg in Switzerland, became through

their Sodalities invincible strongholds of Catholicism in the heart of Protestant nations.[29]

Fribourg in Switzerland

In 1581, on the Feast of All Saints, the canonical erection of the Sodality of Fribourg took place. Vying in fervor with the most flourishing of the pious associations, this Sodality was especially edifying in the loving and grateful devotion, one might say, which it practised towards its founder, the Blessed Canisius. It is the privilege of Saints to exert that power of attraction and to captivate souls by the charm of virtue.

It was the custom to note on a roll of honor the good works accomplished every month by the Sodalists. Here is an example of this spiritual treasure, from a Latin manuscript kept in the cantonal library of Fribourg.

"During this month of November, 1594, the Sodalists have said the five decades of the rosary some 200 times. They have recited the Penitential Psalms 121 times, the Litany of the Saints 79 times, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin 53 times, that of the Holy Name of Jesus 28 times, the Office of the Blessed Virgin 12 times; that of the Holy Ghost 11 times, that of the Blessed Sacrament 6 times.

"One of them recited the Penitential Psalms 14 times for Father Canisius and took the discipline

[29] Doyotte, *The Sodality of the Blessed Virgin.*

three times. Another recited the Rosary for Father Canisius. Another recited the Office of the Blessed Virgin for Father Canisius. Another, every time that he went to pray in the Church of St. Nicholas, recited the *Ave Maris Stella*, or the *Veni Creator* and the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus for Father Canisius. Another said the 5 decades of the rosary three times for Father Canisius. Another made a pilgrimage to Givisiez, recited there the Penitential Psalms, the Litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus, and of the Blessed Virgin and of all the Saints, the beads three times and 5 *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* with arms extended for Father Canisius. The same one heard seven Masses for the conversion of India. Another for 5 days recited each evening, kneeling, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and three *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* for his own sins; this same Sodalist said the Penitential Psalms twice for Father Canisius. Another recited his rosary twice with arms extended, and the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, for Father Canisius, and five *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* in honor of the five joys of the Blessed Virgin, and also taught some one how to recite the rosary. Another said the whole rosary for Father Canisius and the Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin for the same Father. Another made a pilgrimage to Bourguillon, and said the rosary three times and other prayers there for Father Canisius. Another recited several *Our Fa-*

thers and *Hail Marys* for the King of Spain. Another fasted twice, meditated several times, gave alms and recited the Litany of the Blessed Sacrament. Another fasted five times, recited every day five *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* for his sins and for the Valais, etc."

It is unnecessary to say that the holy Religious had a very special predilection for the Sodality. Of this he gave a somewhat original proof one day, which is worth recording.

In 1591, an old Manual relates, the Sodality presented before the public of Fribourg a religious drama, taken from the life of the Blessed Virgin. The throng was enormous. But in this crowd which had gathered to applaud the actors, there was one man who attracted the attention of all: it was Father Canisius. Never had he crossed the threshold of a theater; nevertheless, he desired to give to his dear Sodalists this proof of paternal sympathy and therefore he lessened for once, in their favor, the austerity of his principles. The fact was judged worthy by the Sodalists to be recorded in their annals.

Other Countries

Hungary, Tyrol, Austria and Poland had recourse to the same weapon, the Sodalities, and triumphed under the same banner.

In twenty towns of Upper Germany, in which

the Sodalities have preserved their archives, more than 60,000 men were enrolled: 36,000 of the upper class, 18,000 of the middle class, 6,000 workingmen and 4,000 students. The Sodality numbered 100,000 men in the whole province; 400,000 in the three German provinces (the Upper Rhine, the Lower Rhine and Upper Germany), and in all Germany and the German countries of Austria about 1,000,000.[30] In our own day, in the Sodality of Aix-la-Chapelle one might see more than 15,000 men assembling in ordinary meetings around the pulpit of one of its Directors, Father Rothenflue. Here are the statistics of the Sodalities of Our Lady in the Empire given at the Congress of German Catholics, at Cologne in 1903.—Diocese of Cologne, 360 Sodalities; Münster, 250; Paderborn, 216; Treves, 108; Osnabrück, 105; Strassburg, 90; Breslau, 79; Freiburg in Breisgau, 72; Metz, 56; Mayence, 30; Fulda, 30; Lüneburg, 12; Hildesheim, 6; Gnesen, 5. For the other German-speaking countries (Bavaria, Switzerland and Austria), the *Sodalen Correspondenz*[31] speaks of 4,000 aggregations made between 1882 and 1892; which supposes a considerable number of Sodalists, as the Sodality of Altötting (Bavaria) alone, for example, numbered 14,000 members and that of Ratisbon, 8,500.

[30] Doyotte.

[31] First year, p. 102.

Cologne

Cologne deserves particular regard: five Sodalities kept alive the spirit of work and of piety among the thousands of students of the College of the Three Crowns which the Jesuits conducted. So as to encourage the fervent Sodalists, Father Francis Coster presented them with a little Manual edited by himself, the first book that was published for the Sodalists of the Blessed Virgin (1576). In the diploma of confirmation granted to the Sodality of Cologne, Gregory XIII conceded twenty years Indulgence to any one who should teach any of the points of doctrine contained in this Manual, such as the examen of conscience and of confession, the method of hearing Mass, the meaning of the ceremonies of the Church, etc. Father Coster composed other works of piety or controversy for the Sodalities of Mary of Antwerp and of Arras. The candidates whom he admitted into the Sodality had to make publicly the profession of faith of the Council of Trent against heresy. The formula of reception which his Sodality Book gave—the formula still in use to-day —contains the pledge "never to say or do anything against Mary and never to permit inferiors to do anything against her honor." This is most probably a protest against the blasphemies of the heretics of the time. As to the old town itself, its men were divided into eight Sodalities; that of the

clergy (ecclesiastical); that of the higher classes for the most prominent for blood, capital or science (the Major Sodality of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the three Kings); the third, for the University Students (Minor Sodality of the Annunciation); the fourth, for heads of families of the middle class (Citizens' Sodality of Our Lady and the three Kings); the fifth, for unmarried workingmen, called the Sodality of the Companions; the sixth for apprentices; the seventh for the soldiers; finally, the eighth, for the gold and silversmiths of the town.

But the College of the Three Crowns, with its Sodalists, remained the center of the bulwark against heresy.

Some of the members taught catechism to children and to ignorant persons; others waged a relentless war against the works of the Lutherans; a few of the older ones were real missionaries, valuable assistants to their masters, the Jesuits, and to the secular clergy in converting heretics and in confirming wavering Catholics; all highly supported the rights of the old religion by the public practice of religious services, processions, pilgrimages—all that heresy treats as popish superstition. Such was their salutary influence that a throng of Priests and the Apostolic Nuncio with all his household were seen to enroll themselves as Sodalists, and when in 1583 Archbishop Elector Gebhard Truchsess wished to entice his flock into

his apostasy, the town Council found in the support of the Sodalities courage to proclaim officially the maintenance of Catholicism. At the beginning of the following century (1611), twelve Canons inaugurated a new Sodality for Priests, which soon consisted of forty members and soon kindled the clergy's zeal for the defense of the faith. It continued during the whole of the XVIIth century.

The same happy results were obtained in the other towns of the Rhine, at Treves, at Mayence, at Coblenz, at Spire, in Alsace, at the University of Molsheim in Bavaria, at Dillingen, at Munich, at Augsburg. In this last town the Catholic bakers, perceiving that they were excluded from the corporation by the Protestant bakers, took vengeance by forming amongst themselves, with the approbation of the town Council, a Sodality which wrestled victoriously against this boycott.[32]

Ingolstadt

The Sodality of Ingolstadt, founded by Father James Rem, offered a sight worthy of admiration. The venerable Religious directed it for thirty-three years. One of his pious contrivances, to excite the fervor of his Sodalists, was to assemble the élite among them under the name of *Conference of*

[32] Peter Brucker, S.J. *The Sodalities of Our Lady as a Means of Religious and Social Action.*

Our Mother Thrice Admirable. He found at first only six young school boys capable of entering into his views and answering to his expectations. But, in his eyes, the influence inherent in sanctity was of greater value than the number of members.

To take part in the Conference of Mary, it was necessary to pledge oneself always to live in the state of grace. According to the rules, it was only at this price that one might participate in the spiritual favors with which Pope Paul V enriched the association. Sincere and adequate repentance alone could restore the guilty to their full rights.

The holy Director ardently desired to know which of all the titles of honor given to Mary, was the most pleasing to this glorious Virgin. So, one Saturday, while the Sodalists were singing the litany of Loretto, at the moment when the invocation *Mother most Admirable* was entoned, Our Lady suddenly appeared to him in all the splendor of her glory, and, smiling, deigned to bow her head in sign of approbation. Radiant with joy, Mary's servant arose, and from the corner where he was kneeling in prayer, advanced towards the singers, and made them repeat three times this beautiful title. After that, at every meeting, it became the custom to greet the Queen of Heaven thrice under this name, so dear to her heart. On her side, the Divine Mother never ceased, during two centuries, to show herself admirable to her children.

Graces of cures, of vocations and of holiness

due to the miraculous picture of this Mother "thrice admirable," as she is called by the historians of the Order, made her name celebrated throughout Christendom. Sons of princely and royal families were seen coming from afar to study at the University of Ingolstadt, with the intention of becoming members of this illustrious and holy Sodality. Towards the middle of the XVIIIth century it contained still 600 members.

A Church at Ingolstadt still preserves a tablet which of old adorned the Sodality chapel of the University. Kneeling at Mary's feet, two noble young men are seen clasping each other's hands and they seem to be asking the Blessed Virgin to bless their friendship. One of them is the Archduke Ferdinand, whose signature a register of the Sodality at Louvain still bears in the following words: "Ferdinand II, Emperor, Sodalist of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God." The other figure is his ally Maximilian, who was at the head of the Catholic League and was named by his imperial friend Prince-Elector of Bavaria. Both had as commander-in-chief of their troops the illustrious Count Tilly, who was also a Sodalist.

Other Cities

German historians, even the Protestants, are unanimous in the assertion that it was due to the united efforts of the Sodalists of all classes that the

Reformation was prevented from submerging the Empire and that after the terrible Thirty Years' War, the Counter-Reformation was made possible which saved the ruins of Catholic Germany.

A similar fact is attested by the process of beatification of Blessed Canisius, where the witnesses affirmed that to protect the Catholic Faith in the canton of Fribourg in Switzerland, Providence made use of the Young Men's Sodality which the Blessed had established there in 1581, even before he opened the College. Only those who were over twenty years of age were eligible to it. As time went on, besides the Students' Sodality, the city had three others, one for men, one for young men and one for young women. Their powerful organization defied the attacks and injuries of the heretics of Geneva. To this day, Fribourg has remained faithful to its religion, to the memory of its Apostle, whose tomb it guards, and to its Sodality of the Blessed Virgin.

In 1653, Bohemia had 67 Sodalities, which recruited their members in the ranks of the clergy and the nobility, as well as among the students and citizens.

Among the Austrian Sodalities, that of Vienna must be remarked. Founded in 1579 in the College of the Society of Jesus, it was two years later united to the Confraternity of St. Barbara, which was honored 15 years before by the virtues of St. Stanislaus Kostka. A few years ago, Vienna had

90 Sodalities, twenty-eight of which were for men, eighteen for young men, sixteen for married women, twenty-eight for young women.

Sodalities in Poland

In Poland, the Sodality of Our Lady played an important part in the religious life of the last centuries. "It existed," says Maryan de Bartynowski, "in the schools and colleges of the Society of Jesus, where it was kept up until the Suppression of the Society in 1773. As the pupils of these schools were for the most part of noble birth, the Sodalists were so widely dispersed everywhere, that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the name of *Sodalis Marianus* was quite inseparable from the ideal that was entertained of a Polish gentleman."

The Sodality was not, however, the exclusive possession of the nobility: the Citizens had one of their own. The title of Sodalist was so highly esteemed that the oath, "As I am a Sodalist of Our Lady," was at that time the most certain guarantee of truth. A lively, ardent faith, united to fearless and irreproachable valor, loyalty and nobility of character; above all a real devotion to the Blessed Virgin—such were the distinctive qualities of Our Lady's Sodalist.

A report presented at the International Marian Congress of Fribourg in August, 1902, furnishes us

with most interesting details concerning the history of the Polish Sodalities and about the part which the Jesuits played therein. These few pages are too zealously penned not to find a place in a history of Sodalities of Our Lady.

It was at the zenith of Poland's prosperity [33] that the first Sodality of the Servants of Mary was founded at Plock in 1585, only one year after the *Prima Primaria* had been approved by Gregory XIII. From that moment, the Sodality began to spread in Poland, not only as a manifestation of the piety of the faithful, but also as an institution of religious and social importance.

Pope Gregory XIII, in promulgating the Bull of Erection of the *Prima Primaria*, put at its head the successive Generals of the Jesuit Order. Hence it was that in Poland, as in all Christendom, the Sodalities of Our Lady always developed in the places where the sons of St. Ignatius were to be found, who can thus be regarded as their propagaters and beneficent friends.

In 1600, Poland had already several Sodalities, at Plock, at Kalicz, at Lublin and at Jaroslau. In 1601, one was founded at Cracow for the University students, under the title of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. In 1618, King Sigismund III, the Queen, the Dauphin, Ladislaus-Sigismund, and

[33] The following paragraphs were written in the year 1902, and are from the *Compte rendu du Congrès Marial,* I. 574, ff.

many distinguished personages and court dignitaries, lay as well as ecclesiastics, were numbered in its ranks.

At the beginning of the 17th century the most famous Sodality in Poland was that called *Congregatio nobilis,* which had its seat at the Church of St. Peter in Cracow, but was later on transferred to St. Barbara's.

In 1619, commenced the Sodality for burghers and artisans under the title of the Visitation of Our Lady, always directed by the Jesuit Fathers.

At Warsaw, in 1642, the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception was established, in which King Ladislaus IV was one of the first to be inscribed and to pronounce his Act of Consecration.

Very accurate documents testify that towards the middle of the 18th century, more than 20,000 Poles gloried in the title of 'Servants of Mary.' And it was not a mere name. All strove to accomplish their own sanctification and to acquire those virtues which would make of them strong men, full of activity and devotion, men of sound convictions, who found in the Faith the source and motive of their lives.

The year 1772 was sadly marked in the history of Our Lady's Sodalities by a most disastrous event; their very existence was threatened and their development checked by the suppression of the Jesuit Order. They did not entirely disappear, however, though they lost much of their splendor

and the number of their adherents greatly diminished. First the ex-Jesuits kept them up, then the Fathers of the Pious Schools. Being at the head of flourishing schools, they were able to recruit among the pupils new servants and cavaliers of Mary. These were not, however, the old time Sodalities.

From the year 1814, that is from the happy moment for the Catholic Church when the saintly Pope Pius VII published the Bull which restored the Society of Jesus to life, the Sodalities of Our Lady resumed their work. Multiplying, developing, they reappeared through all Europe as well as in America, in Australia and even in China.

Poland did not allow itself to be surpassed and if the sum total of the Sodalities and Sodalists did not come up to that which had been attained in the 18th century, one must take into consideration the dismemberment of the country. Divided into three parts, it was restricted, then as it is to-day, in two of its provinces (under the Russian and German governments) in its liberty of conscience. Its inhabitants were not free to learn their prayers in their own language, nor to invoke the Blessed Virgin by the title of Queen of the Kingdom of Poland without exposing themselves to great penalties and persecutions. The Jesuits, returning to Galicia in 1822, reestablished the Sodalities for students at Lemberg, next, in 1848, at Saez and in 1872 at Tarnopol. The last named Sodality was

transferred in 1886 to Chyrow to the great Jesuit College, where it is still flourishing. But it is above all since the year 1882 that a revival of fervor has taken place in the Galician Sodalities.

Cracow, justly surnamed the Rome of Poland, distinguished itself in the front ranks and held within the circuit of its ancient ramparts in 1902 as many as 7 Sodalities of Our Lady and among others those of the nobles, of the merchants, of the ecclesiastics of the diocese, of the pupils of the high schools. The oldest of all was that of the merchants, which was later on divided into those of the nobles and of the merchants and which founded and protected the Sodality of young commercial apprentices. In the above-mentioned year, the most active and the worthiest of all praise was the students' Sodality, founded by Father Morawski, Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the University of Cracow and of Theology at the College of the Jesuit Fathers, so well known for his holiness and extraordinary intelligence. These youths exercised the best influence over the University, encouraged others by their example to do good, and induced their school fellows to take up the practice of religion and do social work. It was from their ranks that the lecturers came forth who addressed the tradesmen's and workingmen's societies, so numerous nowadays. They also directed a work which provided food gratuitously to the poorest of the collegians.

The Merchants' Sodality, similar to but independent of the Nobles', besides the personal sanctification of its members by devotional services and four General Communions a year, had the further aim of exerting influence abroad, first by strengthening Catholic tendencies among its young members and by making the Sunday observance general, secondly by collecting munificent alms to support good works.

The members of these three Sodalities were zealous cooperators of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and many of them belonged to the Catholic Club of Cracow. Almost every year they sent to Rome a Peter's Pence collected among themselves. The quarterly review, *Sodalis Marianus,* consecrated to the interests of the Sodality, was edited under their care.

Six of the Sodalities mentioned above, that is all in Cracow, with the exception of that of the Priests of the diocese, were directed by Father Stephen Bratkowski, S.J., whose great heart and assiduous, intelligent labor, as much as his exceptional eloquence, excited in all a deepfelt recognition. All these Sodalists were and had been working energetically for some time to reform the current ideas on the subject of duels and were making an active propaganda outside the circle of their own members. It is unnecessary to add that they all made their annual retreat.

The Sodality founded at Lemberg in 1888, de-

veloped rapidly and the number of its members increased to such a degree that it had to be divided into two, one for the nobles, the other for the students. Both pursued the same object as the Sodality of Cracow and their influence made itself felt in a salutary way through the Galician capital. In addition to the meetings, devotional exercises and General Communions, their particular fields of work were the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul and the Catholic Literary Society—a very numerous club, the members of which were men of true worth and exercised an excellent social and Catholic influence. Lemberg possesses still another Sodality of "Servants of Mary" composed of Seminarians of the great Latin Seminary.

One more word about the Sodalities recently established in the provincial towns of Galicia. Their mission was of much greater extent because they were mostly composed of rural proprietors, whose influence, exercised over numerous servants both in the castle and on the farm, extended sometimes over thousands of agricultural laborers and peasant proprietors whom the current of irreligion had already commenced to injure. The Sodalities of Our Lady, founded by the Jesuits at Sauselles, at Sambor, at Rreszs'w were of this kind.

The Sodality of Sambor was one of the most active in Galicia. Working to instil morality into society, and above all into the people, it united the proprietors of the districts of Sambor and Prze-

mysl. The propaganda was carried on chiefly by personal example, by the example of the servants and by the foundation of circulating libraries in the villages.

Sodalities in Spain

Like Poland, Spain, in its turn, welcomed the Sodality with the greatest fervor.

The Sodality of the College of Montesion, Majorca, a house sanctified for so long a time by the presence of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, was the first established by the Spanish Jesuits.

Barcelona

In the peninsula, Barcelona was the first of the Iberian cities to open its doors to the Sodality in 1577; an example which was followed the ensuing year by Valencia and Saragossa. Its cradle was the University of Barcelona and it began with 16 students of Theology and as many of Philosophy. In May, 1585, Philip II, while visiting the University, assisted at a solemn artistic and theological session, given by the Sodalists, who then numbered 120.

In 1599, a section for married laymen was formed, the special aim of which was to visit prisoners and assist the sick. Every Sunday, six or eight of these gentlemen went to the general hospital to care for the infirm and to help them to

dress. "And after they had washed the hands of the sick," says a contemporary, "the Sodalists perfumed them and their faces with rose water, that the poor sufferers might find some relief in the agreeable scent."

The year 1611 saw the foundation, by the initiative of the Rector of the Jesuits, of a Priests' Sodality under the title of the Immaculate Conception. It soon reckoned a large number of eminent ecclesiastics among its members.

With its Directors, the Jesuits, the Barcelona Sodality disappeared at the time of the tempest in the 18th century, which swept away the Society of Jesus, and one has to wait until 1878 to see it rise again from its ashes under the inspiration of Father Anthony Rota, S.J. To-day, it is in full prosperity. With Fr. Aloysius Fiter, S.J., as Director, it became one of the most fruitful apostolic works of the capital of Catalonia. Its yearly catalogues bear witness to the fact. Thus in that for the year 1902, among the eminent personages who were members of this Sodality we remark His Eminence Card. Cretoni, who was apostolic Nuncio to the Court in Madrid, Mgr. Raphael Gonzalez, Archbishop of Quito, Ecuador, the Bishops of Lerida, Teruel, Jaen, Palencia, Tulancingo (Mexico), de la Serena, de la Concepcion, de San Carlos de Ancud (all three in Chile), Trincomali in Ceylon.

The Sodality in 1911 numbered 1500 members, divided into 12 Sections, to each of which a special

work of charity or piety was assigned, namely: daily Mass, weekly Mass, weekly Communion, the *Laus Perennis,* or perpetual veneration of Our Lady Immaculate, of St. Joseph and of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Laborers' unions, Catechism instructions, visits to the hospitals of the Holy Cross, of St. Lazarus and of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the apostolate of the press, visits to the city workhouse, nightly adoration.

The *Laus Perennis* Section had a Mass celebrated every Saturday at the Sodality altar, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. At the same altar, moreover, every Sodalist of the Section in turn spent a half hour in prayer on the day chosen by him. These visits were divided in such a way that each day had a certain number of them.

In addition to this, the intellectual cultivation of the Sodalists was secured by nine Academies: law and sociology, philosophy and letters, medicine, science, industry and mechanics, music, fine arts, living languages and rhetoric. Attendance at one of these Academies was obligatory for those Sodalists who had not completed their studies.

There was another feature in which this Sodality closely resembled the model type of the old Sodalities: it had no kind of amusement association as extension or annex, such as sport, clubs, plays, etc.: its life was exclusively devout and scientific.

Its Director had absolute authority over it and

to maintain it in its flourishing condition, he ruled it with a fatherly hand, no doubt, but a very firm one. Every year there were numerous dismissals. This is the pruning destined to preserve the trunk in all its vigor.

The Spanish American Sodality Congress of 1904

To the Directors of this Sodality the glory is due of having conceived in Mary's honor a grand project which will remain one of the most glorious memories of the jubilee celebrations of her Immaculate Conception in 1904. We mean the Congress of all the Spanish American Sodalities affiliated to the *Prima Primaria* of Rome. The Commission of Cardinals which directed the general movement of the religious solemnities for this jubilee, largely blessed and heartily encouraged this Marial assembly, adding that it hoped the Congress would be an efficacious preparation for the international Congress to be held at Rome on 8 Dec., 1904.

Cardinal Salvator Casanas of Barcelona, on his side, warmly commended the project in the following letter, dated 27 Dec., 1903.

"It is with real pleasure and true spiritual consolation that we have heard from the Sodality of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and St. Aloysius, which we love much in Our Lord, the statement of the magnificent plan which you have conceived

and which the Commission of Cardinals at Rome has ratified and blessed, to glorify your heavenly Patroness on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the dogmatic definition of her Immaculate Conception, by the convocation in this city of Barcelona of a Spanish American Congress of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin aggregated to the *Prima Primaria* of Rome.

"It is fitting that your Sodality, which is so ardent in its devotion to Mary Immaculate and which honors her every day of obligation by the recitation of the Little Office, it is meet, we say, and most suitable for it to celebrate with enthusiasm this feast so memorable for the entire Church. We do not doubt but that your celestial Patroness will welcome your efforts, will lovingly bless them, and will prepare abundant graces for you, in order that the feast may be splendid, worthy both of the magnitude of its object and of the importance of your Sodality.

"We are happy and we congratulate ourselves that it is a Sodality of our beloved diocese which has taken the initiative in this great demonstration of love on the part of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin. As for us, we bless your project; it is with real satisfaction that we take it under our protection and we accept the direction of the Spanish American Congress during the period of time it is held in this city.

"It is a great pleasure, moreover, for us, to bless

your Sodality, beseeching Our Lord to crown it with graces and benedictions."

The Spanish American Congress took place, indeed, from the 22nd to the 27th of November, 1904.[34] It was a splendid manifestation worthy of the Spanish people, so devoted, above all others, to the Immaculate Mother of God. Some 30,000 persons, 15,000 of whom were men, took part in the closing procession, and in the marvelous array of banners waving in the wind, the sons of Spain saw floating, not without emotion, the four standards of Lepanto, which are religiously preserved in the royal chapel *del Palau.*

But we must return to the ancient Sodalities of the Iberian peninsula.

Madrid possessed one of the first Marian associations for young men, which served as a model for many others in all parts of Spain.

At Granada, 300 Sodalists were engaged in visiting the hospitals, in finding positions for destitute young girls and in assisting all the indigent.

At Cordova, they took a special interest in the prisoners who were languishing in debtors' prisons. Every week two members of the Sodality, one a Priest, the other a lawyer, came to them and actively helped to expedite the cases in suspense.

[34] The account of the Congress forms an octavo volume of 700 pages, close print. It is a precious mine of information on the Spanish Sodalities.

Others went through the city on certain days, collecting in the streets 400 or 500 vagabonds or beggars whom they brought to the Jesuit Church to prepare them for the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

Seville witnessed the establishment of a Sodality exclusively composed of lawyers; its aim was to take charge gratuitously of the cases of the poor and of strangers, to settle disputes and thus to avoid proceedings at law, expensive and fatal to family peace.

In the same city, the Priests' Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, had as its object to enhance the splendor of divine worship, especially during the Forty Hours' devotion. As a result, the people came in throngs to the Church, abandoning the dangerous Carnival shows.

The first Sodality erected in the Philippine Islands dates from the year 1600. It was founded in the Jesuit College of Manila under the rectorship of Fr. Peter Chirino.

Sodalities in Portugal

Under John IV, the Sodality flourished in Portugal. This prince had established one in his own palace for his pages and the noblemen of the court. The pious king consecrated his person and his kingdom to Mary Immaculate, and he desired, in order to perpetuate the memory of the consecration,

that an inscription should be placed on the city gates and the gates of the kingdom's strongholds, which reads as follows:

"John IV, king of Portugal, together with his Council, during the yearly tributary census, publicly consecrated himself and his kingdom forever to the Most Immaculate Conception of Mary and swore to defend the Mother of God, ever preserved from original sin, whom he had chosen as the Patroness of the Empire, and he ordered this lasting memorial in stone to be erected to foster the piety of the people of Portugal. In the year of Our Lord, 1656, the 17th year of his reign."

The king himself was the Prefect and sometimes even the preacher of his Sodality.

Of all the cities of the kingdom, Lisbon and Evora dispute the honor of having been the first to welcome the pious associations of Mary. The fact is, the dates of their foundation belong to the same year, 1583.

Sodalities in Belgium

In Belgium, Bruges, Ypres, Mons and a number of other cities opened their doors to the Sodality. And Brussels, first of all, had eight Sodalities; then Malines and Louvain seven, with a total of 1600 Sodalists. In 1885, the Catholic University of the last mentioned city celebrated with solemnity

the tercentenary of the foundation of the students' Sodality, which in 1911 numbered 800 members.

Formerly, the Belgian capital had as many as 19 Sodalities for men and young men. Its Latin Sodality gloried in the possession of 20 members of the Privy Council and of the Chancery of Brabant.

At first, that is in 1594, Douai had but two Sodalities, composed of 400 members, but later on the College of Anchin comprised eight and was able to send to Our Lady of the Holy Girdle at Valenciennes and to the miraculous Crucifix at Arras as many as 800 pilgrims, all Sodalists.

Antwerp

Antwerp, above all, with its nine Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin, distinguished itself by its zeal. The Sodality of the Immaculate Conception was very probably the first Belgian Sodality aggregated to the *Prima Primaria* of Rome. Its manuscript history, preserved in the Archives of the Jesuit College of Louvain, opens with these words: "In the year of Our Lord, 1585, on Dec. 8th, the Feast of Our Lady Immaculate, the Sodality of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the most Pure Mother of God, was inaugurated at Antwerp and met for the first time at the College of the Society of Jesus in the presence of Father Francis Coster, Provincial of the same Society in Belgium. The former members of the Sodalities of Cologne, Douai and

elsewhere, who were banished because of their religion by the Guelf rebels against His Majesty, were called to it. Father Coster gave up to the Sodality the Hall of the Colonels, where the aforesaid Colonels or officers held their meeting during the rebellion and plotted against religion, the King and the honest citizens of the town; so that this haunt of the devil and his instruments was seen transformed into a chosen dwelling of God and His gentle Mother Mary, the Patroness of the above mentioned Sodality."

One of the characteristic traits of the Reformation was blasphemy against the August Mother of God. Those sects had vilely profaned her images; the Sodality of Father Coster had it at heart to get up a solemn reparation. They actually did manage to decorate the façade of the City Hall of Antwerp with a statue of the Immaculate Virgin, bought at their own expense, and in the presence of the chief Magistrate and the crowd that came running from all sides to witness the spectacle, adorned it with the scepter and crown, the insignia of her sovereignty over this capital of commerce.

After less than a century's existence in Belgium, the Jesuits of the Franco-Belgian Province were directing 90 Sodalities, almost exclusively composed of men.

Many of the Sodalities won respect and honor by an oath to defend the Immaculate Conception,

which they exacted from their members. Of this number was the Sodality of Lille in 1657, and that of the great city of Brussels in 1661, whose example and efforts ended in the Consecration of the States of Brabant to the Immaculate Virgin. The Sodality at that time was directed by Father Henry Balde, S.J., of Ypres, who fulfilled this function for 17 years. The devout and magnificent ceremony took place in the Royal Chapel of the Dominican Church, where the Spanish nobility were accustomed to assemble. The highest dignitaries of Church and State arranged to meet there. The Archbishop of Malines, representing the clergy, and the Duke d'Aerschot, the nobility, were surrounded by the chief magistrates of Louvain, Brussels and Antwerp, who, in turn, were accompanied by their syndics. When the Holy Sacrifice was completed, the Archbishop advanced to the altar and kneeling on the steps read the formula of the oath which all the members of the States had previously signed. After that, Father de Fresneda, S.J., pronounced an address in Spanish, another orator spoke immediately afterwards in French, and during eight days ceremonies and speeches followed in succession to the glory of the Immaculate Virgin. A second octave of celebrations ensued to permit the parish clergy and the Religious Orders to come and take the same oath.

In our days, the activity of the Belgian Jesuits is not less than was that of their predecessors.

From statistics of 1904, they directed 39 men's Sodalities, containing 8,012 members, of whom 1,406 belonged to the upper classes. In the five cities possessing Universities (Louvain, Liège, Ghent, Brussels, Namur) they were at the head of flourishing students' Sodalities. Their Sodalities formed among the middle classes or in the working classes were particularly prosperous; such, for example, as the Sodality of Turnhout, which counted 750 members.

Sodalities in Holland

In the neighboring kingdom of Holland the Marial Sodalities have contributed not a little in our day to the Catholic movement, so full of hopes for the future. Since 1870 there has existed at Maastricht a flourishing Workingmen's Sodality, directed by the Jesuits, which might well serve as a model for all Sodalities of its kind. In 1904, it numbered 1,386 members. A few details taken from its annals will show its social and religious influence.

At each meeting, the Sodalists pray in common for their employers, for whose intention a Mass is celebrated each year. The employers are invited to it and they respond in large numbers to the invitation. One year, 84 assisted at the service.

In 1891, the Sodalists considered it their duty to celebrate solemnly the Golden Episcopal Jubilee of Leo XIII. On that occasion, they invited the high personages who were decorated with Pontif-

ical orders. All, except one who was legitimately prevented, answered the invitation, even the Governor of the Province as Commander of St. Gregory.

In 1896, when the Sodality celebrated the twenty-fifth Anniversary of its establishment, the aristocracy of the town, at the Sodalists' request, agreed to form a mounted guard of honor to escort the Bishop who came that day to celebrate Pontifical Mass in the Sodality Chapel.

In this way the question of the class union was solved in practice.

The Sodality in Holland is a force which must henceforth be reckoned with. In 1895, the socialists inaugurated a strike. Thanks to the Sodalists, a Catholic Association was at once founded in opposition which crushed the revolutionary effort.

In June, 1903, the elections for the provincial Council took place. Against a fervent Sodalist, a Catholic of doubtful Catholicity was set up. About the latter the freemasons, Jews, liberals and socialists united, quite certain of success. The Sodalist workingmen entered the campaign and their candidate won by a large majority. The disconcerted socialists thus learned that by belonging to a pious association civil rights are not forfeited.

A very remarkable incident occurred in 1894 on a purely religious ground. Cholera broke out in the city. In 2 or 3 days it had seized 100 victims. Then the Sodalists went from house to house distributing thousands of pamphlets on which were

printed a prayer to St. Ignatius Loyola, and a recommendation of the water well known by the name of St. Ignatius Water. That very day the cholera suddenly ceased, all the sick without exception recovered, and not a single fresh case broke out. There was but one voice throughout the city to recognize the marvelous character of the event.

Sodalities in China

There is no place, not even in heathen lands, where the vigorous tree of the Sodality has not struck powerful root. In 1664, 87 years after China had opened her doors to the preaching of the Gospel, the Christian religion, and with it the devotion to Our Lady, had penetrated into ten provinces. More than 400 Sodalities had been established there in honor of the Blessed Virgin and in honor of the Passion of her Divine Son. They often contained more than a hundred members, chosen from among the most fervent neophytes: zealous catechists were formed therein. They were undoubtedly largely instrumental in the work of conversions, the number of which about this time mounted up to 5,000 and even 6,000 a year. The Sodality of the Mother of God at Peking provided for the needs of destitute Christians.

In the new Missions of China, the Jesuits have had recourse, as did their predecessors, to the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin to render their apos-

tolate fruitful. The latter had founded in the country more than four hundred Marian associations. At the time of the tercentenary of the foundation of the *Prima Primaria* in 1884, celebrated with such splendor throughout the Christian world, the members of the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception at Tong-Kia-Tou, the southern suburb of Shanghai, addressed to the Sodalists at Rome, a letter of congratulation, a touching mark of the union which reigns in the great family of Mary and most interesting for this reason.

It was written in Chinese on white silk. The two outside folds which formed the envelope were richly embroidered with dazzling colored silks. Here is the literal translation of this original document:

"To the Prefect and all the Members of the First Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, greeting.

"We, considering that every tree has a root, every river a source, everything an origin whence it has arisen, if we ask ourselves where our little Sodality, already more than twenty years old, came from, we find that your noble Sodality is the origin of ours.

"Having been informed that the anniversary of the day of your Foundation is at hand, and that the Sovereign Pontiff has granted you special favors, we, the least of your brethren, who are united to you in heart, as the members are to the body (and they are really so), we who are linked to you

at least as the hand and foot are attached to the body, we, who as well as you are children of our good Mother Mary, on this day when your Sodality tastes so great a happiness, thought we ought to write to you this little letter.

"We shall pray that Mary will give you great graces. We hope that you will pray for us that we may remain steadfast in the Faith and may enjoy your presence in Heaven.

"We greet you and we wish you great peace. Your heart will guess the rest; we shall say nothing of it.

"Given at Tong-Kia-Tou, City of Shanghai, in China, the tenth year of the emperor Kouang-Sin, the tenth of the moon, the thirteenth day."

[Nov. 30th, 1884.]

Signed: Aloysius Sicca, S.J., Director, Stanislaus Shang, Prefect, Matthew Sin, Secretary.

Sodalities in Paraguay

The numerous Reductions which were formed in the Missions of Paraguay under the names of the Assumption, Loretto, the Immaculate Conception and similar titles, witnessed the formation in their midst of bodies of chosen souls, under the protection of Mary. Christian piety will not be astonished, therefore, at these words of the Bishop of Buenos Aires, Dom Pietro Fayardo: "I do not

believe that during the entire year a single mortal sin is committed in the Reductions."

Sodalities in Canada

Canada is justly proud to-day of its magnificent men's Sodalities. So we read in a report to the Marian Congress held at Lyons in September, 1900: "At the very time of the foundation of the colony, in 1657, the Fathers of the Society of Jesus organized at Quebec the first Men's Sodality in honor of the Blessed Virgin. The Governor of Quebec and all the leading citizens of the town were proud to belong to it. This Sodality still exists and new centers have been formed. At the present day, the five men's Sodalities of the city of Quebec have more than four thousand associates out of a Catholic population of fifty thousand souls.

"Montreal followed Quebec's example. A men's Sodality was founded there by the Jesuits and they directed it until the suppression of the Society and till the death of the last Jesuit in Montreal at the close of the last century."

The Quebec Sodality was the first of these associations founded under the patronage of Mary in America. By right of this precedence, particular notice should be paid to it.[35]

[35] *Histoire de la Congregation de Notre Dame de Quebec,* 1657-1903. *Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart,* Dec. 1902, Jan. 1903.

Father Poncet, then pastor of Quebec, laid its foundations under the administration of Father de Quen, Superior of the Canadian Missions. In the *Journal des Jésuites,* dated Ash Wednesday, 14 Feb., 1657, is the following description: "Father Poncet held the first meeting of the Sodalists of Our Lady in his room. There were twelve of them." A few lines further on, dated 24 Feb.: "M. Vignard said the first Mass in the Chapel of Our Lady's Sodality. At the first meeting of the Sodalists, M. de Charny was recognized as Prefect of the said Sodality." M. Vignard (or Vignel) was one of the few secular Priests who then lived in Canada. Later on he became a Confessor of the faith.

Father Poncet was a man of great worth who had been on the point of dying a martyr for the Faith. Carried off by the Iroquois near Sillery in 1653, he endured two months of terrible captivity. Bruised by cudgeling, exhausted by the tortures of hunger and thirst, he had his fingers partly burned off and the index finger mutilated. Every day he expected to be put to death, when suddenly he was liberated by the Indians in view of the re-establishment of peace.

Father Poncet chose twelve of the chief citizens of Quebec who were to serve as foundation stones to the new edifice. The first Prefect was Charles de Lauzon, M. de Charny, son of John de Lauzon, Governor of Canada, and at the time of his elec-

tion to the Sodality, provisional Governor of the new Colony. He was a man remarkable for his piety and learning. The following year he entered the ecclesiastical state.

Prominent men, such as the Marquis de Tracy, Royal Lieutenant Governor of all America, were proud to belong to the Sodality. The Marquis chose the Feast of the Assumption, 15 Aug., 1666, to make his solemn Consecration to Mary, and as he was desirous of sanctifying the great day by an act of charity and humility, he gave a dinner to the poor of the hospital and served them himself, seeing in them the suffering members of Jesus Christ.

This example, moreover, was not a new one. On 15 Aug., 1659, the day Mgr. de Laval had been invited to say Mass for the Sodality, as an expression of his gratitude for this honor, he waited on the unfortunate inmates of the same hospital.

The Chronicle of the city hospital has perpetuated the memory of a Sodalist called Peter Gosselet, a native of Charlesbourg. He was a very pious man who spent long hours before the Blessed Sacrament and edified everybody by his unalterable patience. As long as he was able to walk, he never failed to come to Quebec to assist at the Sodality meetings. One day when he had set out early in the morning, as his eyesight was very feeble, he lost his way. Being weary and fearing to miss the meeting, he called out with his simple faith: "Oh,

my dear Mother, I know not where I am; have mercy on me!" Instantly a beautiful lady was at his side, who took him by the hand. "Come, my friend," she said to him, "I shall set you on your way again." She did indeed guide him, then added: "Go ahead now, you are on the way." Peter thanked her, advanced a little way and, turning back to see if his charitable guide was following him, he saw no one.

During the entire seventeenth century the Sodalists distinguished themselves by their fervor. For a long time, they enjoyed the exclusive honor of carrying the canopy on the feast of Corpus Christi. From 1661 they made the visits to the Churches on Holy Saturday in a body. One of their Directors, Fr. Guesnier, even introduced the custom of a meditation in common every Saturday morning.

This Sodality still exists. With the approbation of Mgr. Turgeon, it was placed under the Jesuits' direction again in 1848, and it continues its work of salvation after the many critical periods through which it has had to pass during the course of its long existence. On 3 Feb., 1907, it celebrated the 250th anniversary of its foundation. A brochure of 126 pages in octavo with illustrations, published on that occasion, gives a history of this Sodality and a detailed account of its jubilee celebrations.

The Hurons

The wonders worked by the Sodality among the conquerors of Canada were repeated among the Christian Hurons who, driven from their country, had come in 1650 to place their faith and their lives under the protection of the French of Quebec. They settled on the Isle d'Orleans, 2 leagues from the city, and formed there a very flourishing Christian parish under the direction of Father Chaumonot.

The great missionary established a Sodality among them. Nothing is more edifying than the details of it that are given in a Relation, dated 1653.

"What helped me most to awaken a spirit of fervor in this Huron colony," he writes, "was the ardor they developed last year to honor the Blessed Virgin. In order to inflame their devotion the more, a Sodality was erected in their midst into which only those men and women were admitted who led exemplary lives and rendered themselves worthy of reception by their virtues. At first it was composed of only ten or twelve members, who redoubled their fervor when they saw themselves chosen in preference to others. They desired to be faithful to the honor of bearing that beautiful title of 'Servants of Mary.' A large number of those who had not been chosen, strove to become worthy of the honor. They went humbly to the missionary

asking him what there was to be criticized in their conduct, because they wished to amend their lives and to become Children of Mary. Each one was told his faults: one that he was careless about the public prayers; another that he did not take pains enough to put the spirit of God in his family; one woman that she lost her temper too easily; another that she was slanderous and that she set families at variance by her tales.

"Soon most of them were seen to change so much in their conduct that every month a great many had to be received. Their reception filled them with joy, for they were convinced that to be a worthy Child of Mary was to be assured of one's salvation.

"Sundays and holidays they assemble in the early morning. Instead of the Office of the Blessed Virgin, which they cannot recite, they say five decades of the Rosary in two choirs, the men on one side, the women on the other. The women are the more numerous and I can truthfully say that among the Indians, as in the rest of the world, they are always the devout sex.

"Their meetings last nearly an hour, because after each decade they stop and the missionary gives them a short instruction. During the Priest's absence, it is the Prefect of the Sodality who speaks. The Sodalists have chosen him themselves and have chosen well, for he is a man of extraordinary worth and full of ardent zeal.

"After the first decade, he exhorts them to pray to God with attention and to remember that the Blessed Virgin sees them. After the second, he tells them that true devotion to the Blessed Virgin means to have a great horror of sin and that this should be one of the characteristics by which a Child of Mary is known. Another time he mentions that it is a great pleasure to Our Lady to see that they do not forget her on leaving the Chapel and to know that they love to repeat from the depths of their hearts: 'Most Blessed Virgin, I desire to serve thee.' Or again the preacher will say: 'My brethren, it is when we are tempted, that the Blessed Virgin recognizes those who truly have respect and love for her. We shall say to her: 'Most Blessed Virgin, I love Thy Son Jesus more than the pleasure that tempts me.' If the temptation continues, let us persevere in the same prayer. 'Whosoever loves Jesus does not love sin.'

"Then comes Holy Mass, during which the savages sing the *Gloria, Credo* and *Pater* in the Huron tongue to the Church chant. There are always a certain number who receive Holy Communion with a devotion that makes us realize that Jesus is the God of the Indians as well as our God.

"About noon, they reassemble for a sermon and the recitation of five more decades of the Rosary, which is done as in the morning, but with the insertion at each decade of a Church hymn (instead

of an instruction), a practice which never fails to excite their devotion.

"In the evening, they have a third meeting for Benediction, when they sing the Litany of the Holy Name or the Blessed Virgin or a few Huron hymns in honor of the Blessed Sacrament."

The great ambition of the Sodalists was to be irreproachable in their behavior and it was in this that God blessed them. A woman or a girl was practically safe from temptation if she had been able to get into the Sodality. A profligate would not dare to tempt her. Indeed, when one thinks of the license in all things which they had enjoyed for so long a time in their savage life, it was delightful, we are told, to see the delicacy and purity of their consciences. The fear of God had been stronger in their hearts than the temptations of the most inveterate passions. One woman gave the following splendid example of forgiveness of injuries, one of the characteristics of the love of God. She saw her son covered with blood flowing from the serious wounds which another woman, who had flown into a passion, had inflicted on him. The mother was deeply moved and in tears she sought the missionary. "Please," she begged him, "come with me to the Chapel of Our Lady. My heart would like to be wicked, but you teach us that the Blessed Virgin loves only gentleness, and that she saw her son sacrificed, that she even wept, but while her tears spoke to God as well as her heart,

she still forgave her enemies. I also weep over the injury done to my son, but I wish my tears to resemble those of Mary under the Cross and therefore I pardon the woman with all my heart."

On coming out of the Chapel, they met an aunt of the wounded child, who, having heard what had happened, was hastening with help to take vengeance on the culprit. "Why, my sister," the mother said to her, "how then do you forget that you are a child of Our Lady and that the revenge of a good Christian is to forgive injuries? Go to the Father and let him heal your spirit." The remedy was applied without trouble and obtained the effect.

Another mother saw her child, whom she dearly loved, dying. This was her prayer: "Holy Virgin, formerly I was inconsolable when one of my dear ones died, but since I have become your child and know that to please you I must do what God wishes, I have no need of any other consolation than to remember you are my mother, and that I will be your daughter, if only I tell Jesus I find everything right which he has done."

The grace which the good Indian Sodalists asked for above all others was the one which the Blessed Virgin bestowed on many, that of final perseverance.

Let us cite, as an example, a woman some 30 years old. As soon as she felt herself attacked by sickness, she entered the Chapel of Our Lady, went to Confession, heard Mass kneeling and received

Holy Communion. On leaving, she said: "I am completely exhausted, but since I must die, I want to die honoring the Blessed Virgin and reciting my Rosary, for this prayer seems sweeter and more lovable to me than all others." When the missionary used to question her about her illness, she said to him: "Father, do not trouble yourself about this feeble body, which soon must rot, but speak to me of God: that is the one thing which consoles me." Her mother was sick at the same time and near her the girl encouraged the mother to endure with love the sufferings of her sickness and to await the moment of death with joy. The mother bore witness that, day and night, her daughter never ceased praying and that one day, after she had been heard repeating many times: "Jesus, have mercy on me, lead me to Thy Paradise," she called out suddenly: "Here comes Jesus, he has had mercy on me!" It was with these sentiments that she breathed her last.

Another death, that of a young man 36 years old, named Armand, was no less edifying. During the 17 years which had elapsed since his Baptism, he had shown the greatest fidelity to his Baptismal promises, but after the establishment of the Sodality he had redoubled his fervor. Every day he heard 2 Masses, even in midwinter, no matter how rigorous the cold was. Kneeling on the ground with hands clasped, he assisted at the Holy Sacrifice with touching devotion. After his prayers, he

went to work in his field and when he took a moment's rest, it was to say the beads, often five or six times a day. Falling sick, he asked to be taken to the hospital to be nursed by "the Holy Daughters," as the Hurons call the nuns. His illness seemed slight at first, but on the fourth day he felt a violent pain in his head, and so asked for the Huron missionary. "My brother," he said, "you must prepare me for death. Hear my Confession, because I am quite sure the moment is close at hand. Yes, I have faith, and Jesus, Who sees my heart, knows well that I am sorry not to have served Him more faithfully. He has given me many graces, but this is the greatest, to see myself dying a Christian. I do not regret life, I do not fear death; for Jesus will have mercy on me." Just as he finished speaking, the violence of the pain made him lose consciousness, but in his delirium he spoke only of God and continued thus till his death, which was nigh.

A memorable circumstance for this little mission gave several good Sodalists the opportunity to display their virtue. It was in 1656. On 20 May, the Iroquois, always the mortal enemies of the Hurons, came to attack them even as far as the retreat they had found in the midst of the French colony. The enemy surprised them when they were working in the fields and after they had massacred several Hurons, they took 71 prisoners. Among the captives, there were eleven Sodalists;

the Prefect himself was of the number. He was called John Pachonk and was distinguished as the most fervent of the band. He was far from giving way in captivity and proving false in the midst of tortures. Instead of singing his feats of valor, as was customary, he chose as a subject for his songs what he had most in his heart. "Do not pity me," he kept saying, "do not think me unfortunate. I shall be happy in Heaven. I am not afraid of the flames which my blood is able to extinguish. I only fear the fire of Hell, which shall never die out. This life is nothing to me; my thoughts carry me to Heaven." He consoled the other captives and encouraged them in their sufferings. As for himself, burned in all parts of his body with fiery red axes and with burning brands, he did not utter a single cry or make one complaint. He prayed to God in the midst of the flames and said boldly that a glance towards Heaven with the ejaculation "Jesus have mercy on me!" relieved him in his pains and obtained for him an increase of strength and courage.

On the return march to their own country with their prisoners, the Iroquois stopped some time a half league from Three Rivers, 90 miles from Quebec. As they were not then at war with the French, they permitted the missionaries of this post to visit the prisoners. One of the Fathers wrote after the visit: "In truth, God hath done all things well. His judgments are astonishing. I

have seen the flower of the Huron Sodality led captive with a quantity of others, whose devotion would be accounted extraordinary even in convents. May He be forever blessed, because He hath done all things well! One may well imagine how it affected me, because of the great affection I have for this poor nation. I had the pleasure of visiting them three times in the Iroquois camp. I heard all their Confessions, after having made them pray to God. Assuredly, faith reigns in their hearts. Never have they shown deeper sentiments of devotion nor more courage than they did on this occasion in the presence of all the Iroquois, who did not show any aversion to prayer. Even when I profited several times of an opportunity to say a little word about Heaven and Hell in the latters' presence, they always listened to me with the most profound respect. I found among these captives a young woman 18 years of age who had been baptized by Father de Brébeuf. Truly I never saw anything more innocent. A cloistered nun could not have preserved her soul in a higher degree of piety."

A Relation of 1657 gives other details about this Huron Sodality. It numbered then 50 members, who vied with each other in zeal and fervor. Proof of this was particularly given during an epidemic which spread through the village. The Sodalists were eager to visit and nurse the sick and when many of them also had been attacked by the sick-

ness, they showed in their sufferings the piety which they had so much recommended to others.

There is nothing more touching than the exchange of sympathetic acts between the Gentlemen's Sodality established in the Jesuit Professed House in Paris and Father Chaumonot's Sodality.

Touched by the virtue and zeal of the Huron Sodalists, these gentlemen had sent them a charitable donation. The good neophytes desired to thank their benefactors and to give them a token of their gratitude which should at the same time show their devotion to the most Blessed Virgin. In 1664, the Indians sent them, in consequence, a wampum necklace to be offered to Our Lady in the Sodality Chapel. It bore the following inscription in black letters on white ground: "Ave Maria gratia plena."

A little prayer in their native language accompanied the modest gift. It read. "Receive, O Lady of Heaven, this present which the flower of thy Huron servants offer thee. It is a necklace, full of mysteries, composed of our finest pearls. It is vivified and enriched by the salutation which the Angel Gabriel addressed to thee long ago. We have nothing more precious in our hands or holier in our hearts to present to thee and to win Heaven by thy mediation."

They also dictated to Father Chaumonot a letter of the most charming simplicity for the gentlemen of the Parisian Sodality. It was written on birch

bark. The holy missionary enclosed with the note the following translation:

"Brethren, we honor you without disguise. It is only a year since our minds have been enlightened and we have thought of honoring Mary the Mother of Jesus. It was then we were told that in all parts of the world, assemblies of pious souls met to cry to her from the depths of their hearts: 'Yes, Mother of Jesus, thou seest my heart and thou knowest that it is not false when it says to thee: "Mary, I desire to honor thee." '

"We are told that at Paris, where you are respected by all men, it is a pleasure to see you; that you use all your talents to honor the Blessed Virgin. You have preceded us and we wish to follow you.

"The Mother of Jesus, who has regard for the poor, has prompted you not to despise them. For several years you have sent us rich presents. We met together and we said: 'What shall we send to these great servants of the Blessed Virgin?' We said: 'They have no need of us in any way, for they are rich, but they love the Mother of Jesus; let us send them a necklace of our porcelain on which is written the salutation that the Angel from Heaven brought to the Holy Virgin.' We have recited the five decades of the Rosary as many times in the space of two moons as there are beads in the necklace; one bead of black porcelain is worth two white ones. Present this necklace to her and tell

her that we desire her to be honored as much as you desire it, but we have not as much ability as you have with which to serve God.

"A farmer is happy when he sees all the ears of corn in his field quite ripe. It grieves him to see a few unripe ones when the harvest time comes. The Virgin whom you honor with all your hearts looks on you indeed as the ears of her field which are ripe for heaven. She considers us, however, who have not yet the spirit and are only beginning to serve her, as the unripe ears. This saddens her. Since you love her, ask Jesus to make the field of the Blessed Virgin ripe as it ought to be for Heaven, so that she may be happy.

"Pray for us when you say your beads. We shall pray for you when saying ours. We are brothers, since the Mother of Jesus is our Mother as well as yours. She loves us and we wish to love her.

"This is what we have begged Héchon [36] to write to you.

"Your brethren, James Oachon, Prefect, Louis Taieron, Joseph Sondouskon, Assistants, honor you and unaffectedly greet you."

The letter bore the following address: "To the gentlemen of the Sodality of Our Lady in the Professed House of the Society of Jesus at Paris from the Huron Christians of the Sodality of Our Lady."

[36] The Indian name for Father Chaumonot, which he inherited from Father de Brébeuf.

Sodalities in Turkey

At the commencement of the 17th century, the Jesuits installed at St. Benedict of Galata (Constantinople) founded, in November, 1609, a Sodality of Our Lady under the auspices of M. de Germiny, the French Ambassador. His successor, M. de Gontaut-Biron, Baron de Salignac, considered it an honor to join the Sodality. "This ambassador, being naturally well disposed and devoutly inclined," writes Father de Canillac, the Superior, on 30 October, 1610, "spoke of the work to a few of his intimate friends. His dragomans and several other members of his household entered together with him."

The meetings were held every Saturday in a Chapel which the Ambassador had had painted and decorated; the principal feast of the Sodality, the Immaculate Conception, was celebrated therein with great solemnity in the presence of the leading men of the French colony. Similar Sodalities were founded about the same time in the principal Catholic centers of the Levant, at Smyrna, Salonica, Chios, Santor, Naxos, etc.

At Smyrna, especially, the Sodality worked wonders among the French merchants of the Levant. Some idea of what it accomplished may be gleaned from the following details which Father Charles Boislève sent to Father Nicolas de Ste. Geneviève,

Superior of the Jesuit Missions of Greece, on 24 April, 1657.

"Our Sodality of the Immaculate Conception is one of the most flourishing Sodalities that we have in the Levant. All our French merchants with the exception of 4 or 5, consider it a glory and an honor to belong to it.

"There is a common saying among the French at Smyrna when some one has done wrong: 'What, you are one of Our Lady's Sodalists and you do that!' One day one of the merchants told me he would rather have thirty poignard thrusts in his heart than one mortal sin on his soul, nor does his life contradict his words. He fasts three times a week and gives to the poor one per cent of what he gains.

"Two of these gentlemen had formed such firm resolutions to conquer themselves, that one of them falling into sin again, gave half a crown to the poor for each relapse; the other vowed to give to the poor as many crowns and to fast as many times as he fell into sin. I have seen him carrying out this resolution and giving 5 crowns at one time to the poor.

"Another Sodalist, having learned that a very indecent picture had been brought from Leghorn, inquired for how much it might be bought and when his Confessor answered that it could be had for ten crowns, he at once gave the Priest the sum, saying, 'Go and buy the horrid picture, Father, and

sacrifice it to the Mother of all purity.' The desire was carried out, for the painting was burned, although an English merchant offered fifty crowns for it.

"Hardly a week passed that some poor slave did not experience the generosity of these good servants of the Blessed Virgin. They were often told that one infidel needed only thirty crowns, another, only twenty, to gain his liberty. This touched their well formed hearts and all wished to have a part in the slave's deliverance. Two hundred crowns were collected among these gentlemen to deliver a young Candian girl from the danger she was incurring of losing, together with her liberty and her honor, the precious gift of the Faith.

"But their charity was particularly revealed when there was question of slavery not of the body but of the soul. I remember having heard those good merchants say that they would rather fail to gain six thousand crowns than to miss doing a good work of this kind when God gives them the opportunity and the means."

Sodalities in Africa

The land of Africa, also, saw the rise of fervent Sodalities. The Jesuits established some at San Salvador in 1627 and at Loanda in the Congo. The Sodality of Our Lady of Victory was particularly celebrated (1606). The Portuguese soldiers

joined it in large numbers, "for they had remarked," says Du Jarric, "that the most brilliant victories which they had gained had been won on Feasts of Our Lady. For this reason they are wont not to give battle if they can help it, save on a festival of Our Lady. Whatever good fortune befalls them either in peace or in war, they attribute it, after God, to the glorious Virgin Mary. When they want to go to war, they previously make their vows and say their prayers in her Church, after having confessed and communicated. On their return, as well, they do homage there, thanking Our Lord and His Holy Mother for the graces they received. They also carry a statue of the Blessed Virgin in their camp and honor it most devoutly."

God, who destined the Sodalities of His Mother for the conversion of a great number of souls, wished to surround them with the charm of outward splendor. The more illustrious the person who gives good example, the more attractive the example is.

"At Naples," says Father Doyotte, "the Sodality started with the Papal Nuncio, who was followed by three Bishops, two Princes of the blood royal, the Admiral of the Kingdom, two Dukes and many nobles.

"Do not forget, my son," said the Duke of Popoli on his deathbed, "that I thank the Sodality for the little good I have done in my life. I consider myself happier in having been a Sodalist than in having been the Duke of Popoli. A more valuable heritage than the Sodality, I cannot bequeath you." [1]

At Milan, Cardinal Frederick Borromeo, the successor of St. Charles, was a model Sodalist. He founded several Sodalities himself. He called the Men's Sodality his own and wanted to be head and Director of it in person.

The whole Council of Castile formed itself into

[1] This and the following paragraphs are taken from Doyotte, *La Congrégation de la Très Sainte Vierge.*

a Sodality. The Parliaments of Savoy and Franche Comté did likewise, as well as those of Rouen, Rennes, Aix, Metz, Bordeaux, Grenoble and Dijon.

The Prince of Vaudemont, son of the Duke of Lorraine, was Prefect of the Sodality of Nancy. He himself received into it the Prince of Joinville and many other gentlemen of the nobility. Francis II, Duke of Lorraine, wanted to be inscribed among the first members of the Sodality. Charles IV and Leopold followed his noble example. Prince Charles, Bishop of Verdun, was one of the most fervent Sodalists of his city, before entering the Society of Jesus, where he died in the odor of sanctity. He even attributed the grace of his religious vocation to the happiness which he had had in belonging to the Sodality. He gave proof of this in touching terms shortly before his last illness: "Every one passionately desired to hear him," says one of his biographers, "on the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady, which was that of the Toulouse Sodality, an association composed of the most distinguished people in the town and, above all, of the principal members of the Parliament. His audience was captivated. As all manifested an extraordinary satisfaction at the sermon, this Father, who was otherwise so very humble, admitted that such discourses, good or bad, cost him little, for God had given him a great facility in praising His Holy Mother.

"I wish," he continued, "that those who profess

to be her good servants in the Sodalities would deem themselves honored by this title and that they would not renounce it until death. Most amiable protectress! I myself, who have served her so little, attribute the grace of my vocation in the Society of her Son to the good fortune which I had to inscribe my name among those of her dear children, the Sodalists."

When Sigismund III, King of Poland and Sweden, was still only heir apparent, he had insistently begged the Sodalists of Braunsberg to admit him among them.[2]

Ladislas IV joined to his title of King, that of Sodalist of Our Lady. He founded a Sodality himself at Warsaw. His brother assumed the name of Protector of the Sodality; they took turns at being Prefect of it.

Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, went to Turin with all his children to devote himself to the service of the Queen of Heaven.

[2] It is noteworthy that by a very special privilege the Sovereign Pontiffs have accorded and extended the favors and indulgences of the Sodalities to all Kings, Dukes and Counts exercising sovereign power and to their relatives to the second degree who ask to be inscribed in Sodalities that have been or will be erected in any place whatever or in the Primary Sodality, even should these royal personages be absent when received, provided, however, they perform the good works required to gain the favors and Indulgences. By the mere fact of being inscribed these high personages become Sodalists.

In France, Henry of Bourbon entered the Parisian Sodality, of which Anthony of Bourbon was Prefect; the Princes of the blood, Louis de Condé and Armand de Conti, twelve other princes, certain Marshals and some of the Ministers, were proud to wear, together with their crowns and the marks of their rank, the pious insignia of Sodalists.

All the kings of Catholic Spain would have to be enumerated as Sodalists.

Bavaria saw its Dukes and Princes entering the Sodality one after the other, together with their families. One day, William III presented himself with all his suite in the pious meeting, fell on his knees before the image of the Mother of God and, on the spot, amid general emotion, asked and obtained the permission to make his act of Consecration. Later on, becoming Prefect of the Sodality, he received his sons into the Sodalist ranks.

In 1715, the Sodality witnessed an even more touching scene. Duke Joseph Clement, Prince Archbishop of Cologne, who had just been appointed Prefect of the Sodality, was celebrating Holy Mass in the presence of the Sodalists, when his five nephews were seen advancing to the altar to make their Act of Consecration in his hands.

The Counts Palatine of Neuburg vied with the Dukes of Bavaria in their devotion to Mary. "I prefer," one of them used to say, "my title of Sodalist to that of Prince of the Holy Empire."

At the court of William in Munich there lived

three Marquises of the House of Baden, all Protestants. Strange to say, on 7 April, 1585, they sent in a written petition to become members of the Sodality and, having made their abjuration, were admitted on the following first of May by Maximilian of Bavaria, together with the latter's brother Ferdinand.

In the sanctuary of Altötting in Bavaria are laid to rest the body of the celebrated Tilly, who was a Sodalist, and the heart of his illustrious Prince, Maximilian. On the slab of stone which covers the heart, this inscription is to be read: "Here lies the heart of Maximilian I; living, it beat for noble causes and for the love of the Mother of God. Know, passer-by, that even after his death Maximilian loves Mary with all his heart."

But it is perhaps the House of Austria—so proud, besides, of its love of the most Blessed Sacrament—which was the most distinguished of all for its devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and for its attachment to the Sodality. Almost all the Archdukes have inscribed their names on its register.

The Emperor Ferdinand II, the "new Constantine of the last century," greater for his virtues than for his dignity, to multiply the testimonials of his devotion to Mary and the proofs of his zeal for her Sodalities, would have his name entered in all the Sodalities of Austria. He had Mary proclaimed *Generalissima* of his Armies.

But it was not sufficient for this fervent So-

dalist of Mary to belong only to the Sodalities of his own dominions. Desiring to be a member of the Douai Sodality, at that time very famous, he caused the following inscription to be written on the register: "Ferdinand II, Client of the Blessed Virgin." When he was only King of Hungary, he entered himself on the register of the Sodality with this formula: "In the year 1618, on the seventh day of November, Ferdinand, King of Hungary and Bohemia, Duke of Austria and Sodalist of the Holy Mother of God, to whose constant protection he recommends himself."

His son, the inheritor of his piety and his virtues, seemed even to surpass his father in his devotion to the Sodalities. He wished to inscribe his name with his own hand on the Sodality book of Louvain, not simply as others do, but with a Latin address to Mary, full of devotion and fervor, of which this is the translation: "Most August Mary, I sincerely and justly declare myself one of this company assembled under the invocation of thy Name. To thee I confide myself and all who belong to me; to thee my wife and children; to thee the Roman Empire, as chief of which God has chosen me; to thee the lands I have inherited; to thee and thy protection, my people and my armies, who shall combat only for thee and for thy Son. Receive me to be entirely thine, since I live, reign and fight solely for thy Son's honor and thine own. I shall therefore be thine alone, O Mary!

All who shall be my subjects shall also be thine. To thee belong my possessions and my kingdoms and my imperial crown. To thee the nations and the forces. Protect them, vanquish through them, rule thou in and through them. This is my consecration and prayer, made out of love and duty to thee. The year 1640. Ferdinand." The text is arranged as a lapidary inscription.

In a word, all those who were most illustrious in war, in the fine arts, in piety and science, among the Princes of the Church and even in the ranks of the Popes—the Tassos, the Lambertinis, the Fenelons and Bossuets, Lipsius and Rubens, Visconti and Farnese, Tilly and Turenne, Leopold and John of Austria, Emmanuel of Savoy and Sigismund of Sweden, Kings, Emperors, Nuncios, Cardinals, Popes, from Urban VIII, Alexander VII, Clement IX, Clement X, Innocent XI and Innocent XII to Benedict XIV, Pius IX and Leo XIII were seen flocking to the Sodalities. To these illustrious names many others might be added: Segneri, Descartes, Corneille, Bourdalous, Fléchier, de Wallenstein, Don Juan, Grammont, d'Estrée, Boufflers, Crequi, Séguier, Gretser, Jean Bollandus, Lope de Vega, Calderon; and in the last century, the Marquis of Clermont-Tonnerre, de Luynes, Oliver de la Rochefoucauld, Matthew and Eugene de Montmorency, Emery, Genoude, Laurentie, Récamier, Lord Clifford, James Cathelineau, Eliçagaray, etc.

PERSECUTION

Would it be possible to believe that such an institution could have detractors? It had them, nevertheless; it was bound to have them. In the eyes of the licentious, the Sodality was the citadel of virtue; that it was the daughter, in fact the beloved daughter of the Society of Jesus, was considered an unpardonable crime by Parliaments and Jansenists.

Of this war, the intrigues of which were contrived by the basest passions, it is sufficient to relate one incident.

It was during the first days of that sad 18th century, which began in filth and was to end in bloodshed. The Jesuits had managed to establish Sodalities of soldiers in the midst of the garrison towns. Their adversaries accused them of wishing to become masters of the army. It was an absurd charge, but what is not done under the influence of fear or of deplorable weakness? Fearing to irritate the sectarians, the Regent feigned to take the accusation in earnest and sent the matter to the Council. The latter pronounced a judgment, forbidding all military meetings presided over by the Jesuits. The order was instantly carried out and these Sodalities, the fruits of so much labor and so full of hope, were broken up.

It would seem as if the Jansenists had reason to rejoice over their success, but not at all. They clamored that it was all hypocrisy. This prompt submission, they said, was only a dangerous fraud, merely a clever trick to evade the decisions of the Government.

Fortunately, there was one member of the Council, a former pupil of the Jesuit Fathers, who was himself enrolled under the banner of the Sodality, a famous captain, at that time Minister of War. It was Villars. "I hold in my hands," he said, "the replies of the general Officers and the Governors of forts. All bear testimony that the wishes of the King have been strictly fulfilled. As far as I am concerned, gentlemen," he added, "I bear public witness that as long as I have been at the head of the armies, I have never had soldiers better or braver, or more faithful to duty than those belonging to the so wrongfully accused Sodalities." This single word from the hero of Friedlingen and Denain was most effective and the Regent declared himself satisfied with the explanations.

SODALITIES OF SOLDIERS

In passing, it is interesting to note that the attempts to found Sodalities for soldiers date back to the first years of the Institute of St. Ignatius. "In France," says Crétineau-Joly, "from the time of Henry II to that of Louis XIV, in Europe from

1547 to 1715, the Jesuits lived beneath the soldiers' tent; in the steppes of Poland, in the mountains of Bohemia, in the plains of Flanders or on the battle fields of France, they had established Sodalities."

Thus it was that in 1592, a year of disturbances and wars, the Jesuits of Louvain were seen organizing the young men into a military Sodality, called that of the Holy Eucharist. The city was about to be besieged and a great number of citizens had fled; the Jesuits remained to aid in the common defense. By their care, the youths of eighteen years and over united in an association for the purpose of more efficaciously resisting the siege. Having made a public profession of the Roman Catholic Faith, they pledged themselves by oath to defend it to the last drop of their blood. When the Blessed Sacrament was carried through the streets of the city, an article of their statutes obliged them to escort It under arms.

Informed of the splendid example given by these valiant youths, Pope Clement VIII was only too glad to open generously in their favor the treasury of Indulgences.

There were nowhere better soldiers than these military Sodalists. The moment the sentinels from the turrets' heights gave the signal of alarm, the legion rushed to the ramparts and victoriously defended them.

It is, however, a noteworthy fact that Sodalities of soldiers seem to have had the privilege of giving

offense to the government. At the commencement of the 19th century, when men of faith were trying to supply the deficiencies caused by the destruction of so many great works, Father Roger, with the help of Capt. Bertaud du Coin, had the happy inspiration to found a military Sodality in Paris, in 1821, under the title of Our Lady of Victory. At the beginning of the rules were the following words: "Some French Christian officers, desiring, in these days of irreligion, to revive the noble sentiments of so many knights who prided themselves on serving God and their King, have resolved to form, under the auspices of Mary, Patroness of France, a military and Christian association, to strengthen themselves in the principles of Faith and in the love of their duties; to cheer and encourage one another; to make Religion loved and respected, and to show the world that it is possible to be both a soldier and a Christian. The Catholic Religion which they profess has less need of proofs than of good example. Since the wicked combine and conspire to attack this Divine religion and to deprive society with it of peace, happiness and hope, why should not the good unite to defend the religion which is their glory, contributing in this way to the support of the throne and the prosperity of their country? Therefore, full of confidence in the goodness of God, Who has manifested and every day manifests His great compassion for France, supported by the powerful pro-

tection of Mary, whom they adopt henceforth as their Mother and special Patroness, they constitute themselves into a Sodality."

In these chivalrous expressions there was certainly nothing which threatened the peace and prosperity of France. Already a number of Officers of the Royal Guard and of different arms had had their names inscribed. Even the upper ranks were brilliantly represented by James de Gombau-Rasac, Colonel and Governor of the pages of Monsieur; the Count de Modène, Colonel of staff; O'Mahony, Lieutenant Colonel of Cavalry; Durey de Noinville, Colonel of staff; Amédée de Clermont-Tonnerre, Lieutenant Colonel, second Commander in the staff school; Lieutenant Colonel de la Brousse, etc. The association worked wonders for the greatest good of the army. The irreligious press, however, was not long in setting up a loud cry; it scattered its words skilfully: hints of conspiracy, of mystery, of secret plots, things always terrifying to the masses. Those in high positions deemed it prudent to seem moved; the malevolent insinuations finally reached the Dauphin and he, without further inquiry, publicly declared that he would never receive an officer convicted of being a Sodalist. Antagonism, which irritated passions would soon have caused to degenerate into bloody conflicts, followed. The Officers who were Sodalists thought it expedient to discontinue their peaceful meetings.

THE SODALITY'S RESULTS

Father Binet, in his grand book, the *Masterpiece of God,* eloquently answered those who scoffingly and ironically asked: "Well, what miracles have been performed in the Sodalities?"

"The first miracle is that your inconsiderate zeal and malicious injuries are borne with patience; and that, instead of vengeance being wreaked on you, hearty prayers are offered to God on your behalf.

"The second is that sight has been restored to the blind; for several people who had never seen the state of their conscience have become men full of devotion and of all good will.

"The third is that a large number of paralytics have recovered the use of their limbs. How many persons who had not feet to visit the hospitals, nor hands to give alms, nor tongues to pray to God properly, nor hearts to love their enemies, have been cured by Our Lady and now hasten to whatever place there is a good work to be done.

"The fourth is to see, in a corrupted century like ours, so many young men living with such chastity that they seem like angels in the furnace of Babylon.

"As for the last miracle, I give you my word that several dead have been raised to life, for millions of men perhaps have recovered in the So-

dality of Our Lady Immaculate the Grace of God, innocence of life and the peace of a good conscience. Satan trembles because he sees issuing forth from these Sodalities an immense host of God's servants."

The fruits of salvation produced by the Sodalities are sufficiently shown in the general outline of their history which this book contains. We shall dwell on this point no longer. An instance, however, may be cited—one evidence among thousands—which will undoubtedly be read with interest.

Justus Lipsius, a man illustrious for his learning and still more for his piety, was present every Sunday in the Sodality Chapel at Louvain and was usually the first to be there. At his death he assured Father Leonard Lessius, S.J., that nothing gave him more consolation than being a Sodalist and that he never would have thought that death could be so sweet as he was finding it.

"In my insignificance, or to speak more correctly, in my nothingness, wretched nobody that I am, and even less than nothing by sin, I feel obliged to bear witness that I have received in the Sodality of which our good Saviour has granted me the honor and grace of being a member, blessings that it would be difficult for me to explain, and they have been the source of all kinds of assistance, greater than I can tell. Oh, my Lord and my God, Thou knowest it; may all Thy Angels and Saints bless Thy divine Providence forever!"

THE SODALITY'S HOLY ONES

The most perfect glory, however, of the Sodalities certainly is the phalanx of God's servants who drew from these sources the origin or the growth of their sanctity. Limiting the list to those whom the Church has recognized as eminently virtuous or whom common opinion regards as predestined to the honors of the Altar, the following names may be mentioned:

The illustrious Archbishop of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus de Liguori, Bishops and Doctors. The reader remembers the beautiful tributes the two latter rendered to the Sodalities.

St. Stanislaus, St. Aloysius Gonzaga and St. John Berchmans, the lovely patrons of youth, flowers blooming in the garden of the Sodalities, which they filled with the sweet odor of their angelic virtues. Our Blessed Lady, anxious to adorn the eternal groves as soon as possible with these fragrant blossoms, gathered all of them in the springtime of their lives.

St. Camillus de Lellis, the hero of charity to the sick.

St. Francis Hieronymo, who knew how to make his Sodalists powerful cooperators in the works of his apostolate. With them he often went

through the streets of Naples, and, assisted by their prayers and hymns, preached and converted the most hardened sinners, and prepared for the General Monthly Communion the crowds that thronged to hear him; with them again, he made his way aboard the galleys, to bring to those employed thereon the joys of hope and pardon.

St. Leonard of Port Maurice, whom the Queen of Apostles wondrously endowed with unrivaled eloquence, with health proof against the cruelest fatigue and with an incomparable power of voice. He could be heard easily by audiences of 15,000 people. He could even address 100,000 men and the last rows could follow his discourse. This famous son of St. Francis used humbly to say that if he had done any good, especially if he had avoided evil in his youth, he owed it to the grace of having belonged to the Sodality of Father Gravita at Rome.

St. John Baptist de Rossi, the Vincent de Paul of the Eternal City, first a member of the Scaletta, later the soul of the Oratory of Caravita.

St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, a Sodalist of Freiburg in Breisgau, who was assassinated by the heretics in hatred of the faith.

St. Peter Claver, to whom nearly 300,000 negroes owed the grace of Baptism.

His Director in the spiritual life, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, the great servant of the Immaculate Virgin.

St. Peter Fourier, the founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame, to which he wished to give the devotion to Mary as a fundamental basis. "They are," the "Good Father" used to say, "of Our Lady. It is Our Lady who has conceived, raised, nourished their Congregation. Our Lady calls them, assists them, relieves them, protects them, helps them to persevere."

The list of the Blessed who belonged to the Sodalities is also a long one. On it are the names of John de Britto, who sealed his faith with his blood at Madura; of Andrew Bobola, "the robber of souls," whose martyrdom was one of the most heroic of all mentioned in the annals of the Church; of Charles Spinola and Camillus Costanzo, the victims of Japanese idolatry; of Edmund Campion, the steadfast defender of the Supremacy of the Holy See; of Grignon de Montfort, the founder of the Missionaries of the Holy Ghost and of the Daughters of Wisdom; of Anthony Baldinucci and of Bernardine Realino, whom Pope Leo XIII raised not long since to the honors of the Altar; of John Eudes, founder of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, called that of the Eudists.

It is impossible to close this list without naming a few other Servants of God, many of whom have been honored with the title of Venerable.

Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, the reformer of the Congregation of St. Geneviève; Cardinal de Bérulle, who instituted the Oratory of France;

James Olier, founder of the Society of Sulpician Fathers; Claude Caraffa, who established the Congregation called the Pious Workmen; Bénigne Joly, founder of the nursing Sisters of Our Lady of Charity at Dijon; Julian Maunoir, the apostle of Brittany; Peter John Cayron, the disciple and rival of St. John Francis Regis; Cardinal Bellarmine, one of the most brilliant lights of the Church in modern times; Louis La Nuza, whom Sicily, the scene of his labors and his miracles, has surnamed the Angel, the Saint and the Apostle; Claude de la Colombière, whom Our Lord himself commanded to direct Blessed Margaret Mary; James Salès, put to death by the Calvinists at Aubenas; Thomas Holland, Prefect of the Sodality of the English College of St. Omer, who gave his life in the cause of the Faith; Francis Mastrilli, martyred in Japan; Isaac Jogues and Claude Garnier, heroes of Canada; Mary Joseph Pignatelli, the brilliant link between the old and the new Society of Jesus, and finally countless others whose names, entered in the Catalogues of the Sodalists of Our Lady, are no doubt also inscribed in the Book of Life.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE JESUITS

The Suppression of the Society of Jesus struck a fatal blow at the Sodalities.

With the Jesuits there vanished from many souls not only the fervor of Christian life, but even the simple practice of their religious duties. Thus one of the dykes which might have stayed the revolutionary torrent was swept away. Forty years later, when the Abbé de Lamennais set to work to raise from its ruins the ancient religious edifice, so lamentably overthrown, he did not hesitate to declare this openly: "When in 1762," he writes, "the Sodalities were for the most part obliterated with the Jesuits who had formed them and had directed them with such wisdom, in less than 18 years there was in the Capital of France a decrease of one half in the number of people who fulfilled their Easter duties. About the same time and for the same reason, pious practises were seen to fall, little by little, into disuse; the daily visits to the Blessed Sacrament, family prayers in common, an only too certain omen of the destruction of the Faith."

Two zealous Priests, Anthony Vittené and Septimius Costanzi, succeeded in saving the *Prima Primaria* Sodality at Rome. The Chapel, the seat of the *Prima Primaria,* remained untouched, even

when the government came to take from the Roman College the objects consecrated to Divine worship. Elsewhere, with very few exceptions, the Sodalities, after having languished for a short while, ended by dying out.

Nevertheless, the Society of Jesus, wounded, but not quite dead, was received by the schismatic Catherine II, who did not permit the Brief of Suppression to take effect in her dominions. The new Pope, Pius VI, was not offended, it is said, at her action and scarcely 5 years after the sentence of death, he authorized the Jesuits of White Russia to reopen their novitiate. In 6 Colleges which they had founded in this country, the Sodalities flourished again, as formerly.

It was the same at Stonyhurst College, where the English Fathers, successively banished from France and the Lowlands, at last found refuge in their heretical fatherland.

The Paris Sodality After 1800

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the first person in France to revive the Sodalities, was a former Jesuit, Father John Baptist Delpuits. Six young men, some law and others medical students, who had escaped the general contagion, formed the nucleus: their names were, Régis Buisson, Francis Regnier, Louis Gondret, Joseph Per-

dreau, Augustus Période and Charles Frain de la Villegontier.

On 2 February, 1801, Father Delpuits celebrated Holy Mass in his parlor, transformed into a Chapel for the event. At the Holy Sacrifice, the young men, the first fruits of the new Sodality, pronounced their Act of Consecration to Mary. They used the ancient formula, just as it is printed at the beginning of the "Libellus Sodalitatis Beatae Mariae Virginis," published in 1576 by Father Francis Coster, and little by little it became the custom for the Sodalists to recite this prayer every day together with 15 *Aves* and 15 *Gloria Patris.* It is the formula still used to-day.

"Holy Mary, Virgin Mother of God, I, N.N., choose thee this day to be my Queen, my Patroness and my Advocate, and I firmly purpose never to desert thee and never to say or do anything against thee and never to permit those who depend on me to do anything against thy honor. Receive me, then, I pray thee, for thy servant forever; aid me in my every action and desert me not at the hour of my death. Amen."

When Pius VII came to Paris to crown Napoleon, Father Delpuits judged it an opportune moment to obtain for the nascent work the approbation and benediction of the Holy Father. Consequently, he caused a petition to be presented to the Pope, the purport of which was as follows:

"Most Holy Father

"Jean Bourdier Delpuits, a Priest of over sixty years of age, formerly a member of the Society of Jesus in France, now an honorary Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Paris, approved by His Eminence the Card. Archbishop to exercise the holy ministry in his diocese, prostrate in heart and spirit at the feet of Your Holiness, humbly begs you graciously to deign for the greater glory of God to confirm and approve by your authority and benediction the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, instituted in Paris some 5 years ago, as well as the other Sodalities conformable to that of Paris, which they recognize as their Mother. During the two years of their existence, these last mentioned Sodalities have not ceased to edify the world by their constant piety. May Your Holiness vouchsafe also to grant to me and to my legitimate successors, the necessary authorization to allow Sodalities to affiliate themselves to the one in Paris and to participate in all their entirety in the graces granted by the Holy See to the Sodalities so long established in the houses of the Society of Jesus, Sodalities, the edifying example of which has everywhere contributed to the advancement of general piety in all countries. The pious youths of Paris had the joy and consolation of embracing the Feet of Your Holiness a few days ago, and you kindly deigned, Most Holy Father, to hearken to the ad-

dress of the orator chosen to express the wishes of his fellow members. We shall never forget the paternal affability of Your Holiness; this recollection, dear to their hearts, will strengthen the fervor of their prayers that God may spare Your Holiness to His Church for many years to come."

The Holy Pontiff took great interest in the young confraternity and granted it all the graces and privileges of the old Sodalities.

The reader may have remarked the allusion in Father Delpuits' petition to a ceremony in which his dear Sodalists were permitted to approach the Holy Father's person. On 18 Dec., 1804, indeed, when Pius VII was visiting the Church of St. Sulpice, it was one of the Sodalists, Maximilian Séguier, a descendant of the illustrious family of the Chancellor of that name, who had the honor to make an address of welcome to the Sovereign Pontiff in Latin. Here is the translation:

"Most Holy Father: In the midst of such a large assembly of the faithful, when the Church of France manifests on all sides the great joy with which Your presence fills her, permit a few youths of different stations in life, but whom their religion unites to-day at the feet of Your Holiness, to express to you the sentiments of respect and veneration with which they are penetrated. We shall say to our sons: We saw this Venerable Pontiff leave the Throne of Peter and come to reestablish in France those august ceremonies, consecrated by

the faith of our Fathers, which iniquity had for so long a time abolished. Henceforth may iniquity never come to shelter itself under the charming name of philosophy. She has proved false to herself and cast far from her the mantle with which she once covered herself. To-day, on ground sprinkled with the blood of our Martyrs, we see incense burning on the Altars of our Saviour to offer reparation for the numberless outrages religion has suffered in the person of its ministers. Let us encourage the earnest desires of a Sovereign Pontiff, worthy of all veneration, by complete submission. Let us raise the sacred Standard of the Cross. Let us embrace the august sign of our salvation. May the Divine Goodness vouchsafe to reward the paternal charity which animated you, Most Holy Father, by according you the sweet satisfaction of successfully terminating yourself the great work which you have so well begun."

The Pope was particularly touched by this address and answered it in Latin in terms like the following, says the *Gazette de France:* "Nothing has been more pleasing to me than these sentiments of religion expressed by young men. I pray God to preserve these dispositions in your hearts, to make you find in them your felicity even in this life and to reward you for them with the crown of immortality."

A contemporary document adds that "the Sodalists, by their respectful bearing and large num-

bers, were the first to attract the Holy Father's attention."

This, moreover, was not the only occasion that the young people consecrated to Mary, were able to attract notice by their attitude at once dignified and recollected. On 26 Oct., 1804, the day of the Translation of the Holy Crown of Thorns to the Church of Notre Dame, a place had been reserved at the ceremonies for the Sodalists. The greater number of them approached the Holy Table, to the great edification of those present, who could not recover from their astonishment. It is even said that a worthy Canon, deeply moved at the sight, then such an unusual one, leaned over to his neighbor, repeating with insistence: "Now, where do they come from? But where do they come from?" To which the one addressed, just as surprised himself, replied: "Really, Father, I could not tell you!"

With the luster of piety many of Father Delpuits' Sodalists combined the influence of science—such men as Augustine Cauchy and Laënnec.

Cauchy was assuredly one of the most remarkable men of the 19th century and his prestige was reflected on the Sodalities of Our Lady, of which he always gloried in being one of the most faithful members. It is amazing to see him at barely sixteen years of age, forcing the doors of the Polytechnic School, entering with highest honors the School of Bridges and Roads, and leaving likewise

with the best mark; then becoming member of the Academy of Science at 25, because of his fame as a scientific discoverer. At the time when so many have scarcely finished their studies, he was an eminent Professor at the Polytechnic Institute, the Sorbonne and the College of France. During his entire career, he published over 500 memoirs which were admired greatly by the learned. Finally, he was received with flattering eagerness into the bosom of 18 Academies, which considered themselves honored in counting him among their members.

But this illustrious mathematician aspired to many other titles of glory. Not content merely to comply with the precepts, he also tried to put the counsels into practice. As he had protected the convictions of his youth in the ranks of the Sodality, he desired in his manhood years to take a large part in the Christian works of his time. He was a courageous defender of the Jesuits, who were attacked by dishonesty. There was not a single enterprise begun during 50 years by the spirit of Catholic Charity that was unknown to him. The work of St. Francis Regis and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, numbered him among their most assiduous members. The observance of Sunday and the reform of the penitentiary regulations found in him an indefatigable apostle. He lavished his care on the little Savoyards cast without means of subsistence on the streets of Paris,

whom he, as a Sodalist, had often instructed. Although he was one of the founders of the Work of Schools in the Orient, he did not forget the needs of the young generation raised about him; his last thought was for those excellent Christian Brothers whom he wished to have summoned to Sceaux, the little town where he lived and where he died on 22 May, 1857, assisted in his last moments by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, his directors, his friends and his grateful admirers.

When Father de Ravignan heard of his death, he did not hesitate to say: "Every one is convinced that this saintly man went straight to Heaven. That good Mr. Cauchy! he must have entered Heaven as he used to enter our rooms, without knocking at the door!"

The happy death of this fervent Sodalist of Mary was only the worthy crowning of an eminently Christian life. At the time of his First Communion, young Cauchy had drawn up a sort of rule of life where lines like the following are read with admiration, as they give evidence of an early and profound humility. "I shall never boast of the little science I have learned through my father's care, keeping before my mind, first, that if I know anything at all, it is solely because of the charge my father has taken of me; secondly, that human sciences are as nothing compared to the science of salvation, that it would profit me noth-

ing to know all the former, if I did not possess the latter."

At the Polytechnic School, he recited his morning and night prayers, kneeling at the foot of his bed. At Cherbourg, where as engineer, he took part in the port works, he attended with exemplary regularity the services of his parish church.

To his mother, who was anxious about the dangers of the skeptical center in which he was stationed, he wrote: "They say that devotion will turn my brain. Who are they that say this? It is not those who have much religion. The religious-minded have only mentioned the subject to encourage me to continue my line of conduct and all that has been reported to me on that score does not show that they have any fault to find with me."

Later on, when addressing the unbelievers, he made the following typical statement: "I have devoted myself to the study of human sciences, particularly to those which are called the exact sciences, and I have more and more realized the truth of those words of Bacon that if a little science makes us unbelievers, much philosophy leads us back to be Christians. I have seen that all attacks directed against Revelation have resulted in supplying new proofs of its truth!"

And to his colleagues in instruction, more or less tainted by atheism, he might have dedicated certain of his verses—for he was a poet at times—

such as the following, in which he proclaims very loudly the glory of the Creator. This is a rough translation of them:

"While with fury others war together and for an idle whim stain with blood that ground which in an instant will vanish from their sight, far happier is the astronomer who has gazed at the Heavens. There are read the glory and the magnificence of that God, Whose power all the Universe attests. There also calm and peace are reflected. There reigns with undivided sway and everlasting triumph He Who described the courses of the suns, Who, out of the night of chaos, made light burst forth, kindled the torch of day, transformed vile dust into that man, the fruit, the object of such love. But at such sights my spirit is confused. I hold my peace and I adore Him Whose Glorious Name is read in such sweet strokes on the fires of Dawn and the canopy of the skies."

When Augustine Cauchy was enrolled in the Sodality by Father Delpuits on 3 April, 1808, Laënnec, another illustrious Sodalist, had been a member of it for already 5 years. A native of Catholic Brittany, he set his heart on returning there to sleep his last sleep, leaving to posterity the memory of one of the most learned of men in medical sciences and to his contemporaries the example of a Catholic always faithful to his Religion.

Side by side with these renowned Sodalists, how many others, though less well-known, were the glory

of the Sodality and the consolation of its pious Director!

Not long ago, the exquisite pen of Mgr. Baunard, former Rector of the Catholic University of Lille, drew a few sketches, the principal strokes of which we take pleasure in retracing.

Regis Buisson, a native of Lyons, first Prefect of the little company, was connected with the work of his celebrated cousin, Dr. Bichat, whose writings he published. Learned himself, already an associate member of the Medical Society, he was destined, exhausted by labor, to die soon afterwards at 28 years of age, with the benediction of his father, who said to him: "Good-by, dear child. May God bless you, as I bless you. Au revoir."

Charles Frain de la Villegontier, a native of Vendôme, had, out of devotion, become volunteer physician of the hospitals for the wounded and of the prisons which the proconsols of the Republic were filling, until at the age of 24, he, in turn, fell, prostrated by a disease contracted at their bedside.

Louis Fizeau, an energetic Breton, one day an artillery man in the Vendean army, was, the next day, the generous healer of all physical and moral infirmities in Paris.

Charles Savary des Brulons was a staunch Catholic. It is said that once when, as the winner of the first prize in the examination in Medicine, in 1800, he was invited to dine with the Minister

Quinette, he would not touch a single meat course of the official dinner given in his honor. Four years later, this valiant man expired while nursing the wounded of Val-de-Grâce.

After the School of Medicine, the Polytechnic School sends its contingent of intrepid Sodalists to Father Delpuits.

There is Paul Emile Tesseyre, from Dauphiny, future apostle among the clergy, already an apostle in the school, "where," he writes, "he has found and enrolled 20 pupils who think like himself."

There is John Duplessis, a fugitive from the massacres of the Reign of Terror, ready for all good works. There is Nicolas Emery who found again in the Sodality the God Whom, alas! he had forgotten since his First Communion, which he made in a garret. Then Veillet and Bailleul who, in their historical compositions at school demolish the old Voltairian theses of their unhappy masters against the Popes and the Church. Bailleul died young; Veillet, as chief civil engineer, was to found in Paris the work of Young Prisoners. Another, Charles de Breteuil, Auditor of the Council of State, goes off to raise up the wounded on the battle field of Wagram. Still another, Augustus d'Haranguiers de Quincerot, a lawyer, devoted himself to the ungrateful task of defending young peasants and workingmen against the tyrannical exactions of the imperial conscription.

Such were the young men of intelligence and

heart who prepared for France a new race of Christians, capable of doing honor to that great name, as Father Delpuits congratulates them, saying with a certain family pride: "Of ourselves we are nothing, my dear sons, as you see. But it must not be said that Catholics are more stupid than other people."

Mgr. Baunard adds that the aristocracy too had come to the Sodality. It had come even in the days of the Empire, when certainly the title of Sodalist was not a claim for official favors, and it is just to say that the nobility brought to the Sodality merits superior to high birth.

At the head of the list of aristocratic Sodalists, the Duke de Montmorency-Laval may be named, a soldier of American Independence, against whom we may hope that the French democracy will not allege as a crime the famous meeting on the night of Aug. 4th, during which he, the first gentleman of France, came to lay the sacrifice of his noble titles on the altar of his country.

Another, Charles Augustus de Forbin-Janson, the future Bishop of Nancy, had at that time just been made Auditor of the Council of State by Napoleon. But nobler ambitions than this stirred his heart. "Already," relates Lacordaire, "Janson could not contain himself in Paris. He cast longing glances at the distant lands where oppressed Christianity demands at all times the words and blood of apostles. He wandered in spirit from

America to China, from China to the banks of the Ganges and Euphrates. The hand of God had laid hold of him and was leading him from aspiration to aspiration across the deserted spots of earth to find a place where his devotion might not be hampered."

The Sodalists, however, did not content themselves with edifying others by their piety and consoling them by their charity. They were able, when the opportunity presented itself, to render services to the Church which were full of danger. When Napoleon was excommunicated, it was six Sodalists, who at the risk of provoking against themselves the imperial wrath, clandestinely brought to Paris the Pontifical Bull. The document, secretly received at Lyons by one of them, was translated there and the copy was conveyed to Paris by the Marquis Eugene de Montmorency, who, to escape the police, had concealed it in his boots. The following week, however, three of these courageous youths, of whom Alexius de Noailles was one, were arrested and shortly afterwards an imperial decree suppressed "all establishments known under the name of Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin."

The despot intended this edict to be the death of Father Delpuits' work; but it produced only a sleep. The Sodality awoke in 1812 under the direction of Father Legris-Duval, who then inherited the mission of the venerable Religious.

The year before, in fact, on the Octave of the Immaculate Conception, 15 Dec., 1811, the restorer of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin in France had peacefully breathed his last. The tombstone over his remains bore these two significant inscriptions:

"Rev. H. B. Delpuits, Priest of the Society of Jesus
trained by word and example
innumerable devoted servants of God
and His Virgin Mother."

and beneath:

"Therefore, my children, hearken to your Father: Serve the Lord in truth and seek to do what is pleasing to him."

The memory of this man of God remained alive during the first generations of the 19th century, and 30 years after his death, Lacordaire was fond of calling it up beneath the arches of Notre Dame. "I love to mention him," he said in one of his discourses. "Others have acquired greater glory in their relations with the youth of France; none has merited more than he." For according to the praise given him by Father de Retz, a former Sodalist, who died at Rome in the office of Auditor of the Rota: "Father Delpuits made saints of his young men."

Father Legris-Duval kept the precious heritage of Father Delpuits until 1814, when he handed it over to Father Ronsin.

The latter guarded it for 15 years with a devotion which won him the gratitude of all true Catholics, and with a success which drew on him the jealous anger of the liberals. Indeed, numerous and important recruits came to the Sodality. From 1820 to 1826, the registers of the Association bear the names of 36 Archbishops and Bishops, one Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. Falconieri, and two Nuncios, Mgr. Macchi and Mgr. Lambruschini. Other Sodalists, then simply seminarists or students, became famous later, such as Mgrs. de Rohan, Mathieu, de Mazenot, Gerbet, Sibour, Dumoulin-Borie, etc. Laymen, too, were worthily represented by MacCarthy, La Bouillerie, Clermont-Tonnerre and Récamier.

The Parisian Sodality was the most conspicuous, but it was not the only one. Former Jesuits who had returned to France after the Terror formed similar reunions in several cities. That of Lyons, due to the initiative of a truly apostolic Priest, Father Roger, included three sections: young men, married men of leisure, workingmen. This work did too much good not to give offense to the public authorities of the period. The founder was obliged to go away in 1808. He did not return to resume the direction of his Sodality until 30 years later, when he consecrated to it the rest of a life already wasted by age and labor.

SODALITIES OF WOMEN BEFORE 1824

It was in 1824 that Leo XII reinstated the Society of Jesus in all its former rights over the Sodalities. The work was about to enter upon a new field. Until then the Sodalities had only been established in the houses of the Society of Jesus or annexed oratories; furthermore, they comprised only men, to the almost entire exclusion of women.

During the first two centuries of the existence of the Sodalities, a few Sodalities of women are mentioned, it is true, established in Syracuse, Quito, Fribourg, Treves, in several cities of France and in Rome. But these were always only exceptions. "Many ladies," says Sacchini, "in more than one place and time, strove to obtain permission to come together in associations of this kind; but this was not at all approved." A few members of the highest nobility were, however, admitted by special privilege. Among others were the Empress of Austria in 1581, and her daughter the Queen of France, wife of Charles IX; then, at a later date, the Princess Eleanor, Empress in 1690.

The Sodalities of women which existed, however, were not inferior to those of men in point of fervor. This may be judged, among many other examples, from a few extracts from the rules of the Sodality of Christian Mothers under the title of the Purifi-

cation, formed in 1705 by Father John Croiset, S.J., the illustrious apostle of the Sacred Heart, then Superior of the Holy Cross House in Marseilles.

"*Pious Practices:* Every day, a half hour's meditation, attendance at Holy Mass, the recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, the recitation of the beads, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the evening with another half hour's meditation, a quarter of an hour's spiritual reading and the practise of the Particular Examination of Conscience. These are the daily practises to unite the soul to God.

"The monthly retreat, devotion to the Holy Patron received from the president at the close of the exercises of the last Saturday of every month, the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist on all the feasts of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, participation in the General Communion on the first Saturday of the month or on a feast of the Mother of God, the yearly retreat, placed under the patronage of St. Joseph, from Ascension Day to the Saturday before Pentecost, with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during the four exercises of every day and an Act of Reparation to the most Blessed Virgin on the Feast of the Presentation in the Temple, are acts likewise very capable of preserving souls in piety and fervor in the service of God.

"2. *Duties recommended to Sodalists:* Theaters, balls, gambling and all unchristian entertainments

are absolutely forbidden to all the ladies of the Sodality. The early Christians were rebuked for not assisting at the shows and other profane assemblies. All Sodalists, without exception, ought to endure the same reproach, which will be their most glorious title of honor. Love of home, the avoidance of useless visits, simplicity in dress, submission to the Divine Will in trials, respect and kindness towards their husbands, the Christian education of their children, especially of their daughters, in whom they shall inculcate a contempt for the world, modesty and the practise of virtue, all these exercises are strongly enjoined on them, in addition to the care of their servants' souls and the apostleship of good example.

"They should love all their fellow Sodalists, respect the officers—who alone should enjoy the privilege of precedence—visit the sick Sodalists and pray for their deceased fellow members by offering one Communion, by having Mass said for each and by assisting every Monday of the year at the Mass celebrated for the Dead in the Chapel of the Sodality.

"3. *Works of Mercy:* Every Saturday, four ladies are appointed to accompany the Blessed Sacrament Which is brought to the sick; eight ladies to visit the poor in the four hospitals of the city, and two to visit the sick poor of each parish. Every six months, on the Feast of All Saints and at Easter, four ladies shall be named to visit at

least once a week the poor women kept in prison. All these visits of Charity ought to be made with the intention of honoring Jesus Christ in the person of the poor, and of making up for lost time and useless visits."

DEVELOPMENT OF SODALITIES AFTER 1824

But the expansion of the *Prima Primaria* Sodality became marvelous when a Pontifical Rescript, dated 7 March, 1825, opened its doors to all the faithful and gave to the General of the Society of Jesus full power to aggregate to the Roman Sodality as to a central archconfraternity all other Sodalities of men, women, youths and young girls, even those which were not directed by Religious of the Society.

At the suggestion of Father Legris-Duval, the Paris Sodality gave birth to the Society of Good Works (hospitals, waifs and strays, prisons). It was also in the bosom of this Sodality that the idea of the Society of Good Studies was conceived; its aim was to sustain the young in the principles of Faith and caution them against the temptations of the heart no less than against the errors of the mind. After Father Legris-Duval, Father Ronsin gave almost a new life to Catholic youth, and one of the best fruits of the Sodality was the work of St. Francis Regis, due to the initiative of Mr. Julius Gossin, Counselor in the Royal Court of Paris.

The following associations must be mentioned as having been organized under the influence of Our

Lady's Sodality: the Association of St. Joseph, one of the first attempts for a workingmen's association in the 19th century; the Catholic Society of Good Books, which at the close of the year 1826 had put in circulation 800,000 volumes; the House of Refuge for Young Criminals, about which de Bonald wrote: "When one is incensed by all one sees and hears, when one is about to give up all hope for France, one must, to calm one's soul, look at the different movements undertaken by young men, of which my friend and relative, Mr. de Roussy, whom I have recommended to you, was one of the most fervent instruments. Here, they teach Catechism to the little Savoyards, whose conduct and sustenance, too, they care for. There, they look out for the little wretches sentenced to several years in prison, almost before the age of reason, whose malice is beyond their years, and who without work, without instruction, abandoned to the vilest corruption of the most detestable and too certain lessons of crime, are mingled in the prisons with scoundrels under men who literally acknowledge it; poor unfortunates, I say, received at the expiration of their term into a house managed by the good Christian Brothers. By the care and under the superintendence of the Young Men's Society, they are instructed in the duties of their religion, before being restored to society and they are even trained in some profession to give them the means to earn their living."

SLANDER

The Sodalists did too much good not to stir up against themselves all the passions and all the anti-religious sects. Haunted by the phantom of the Sodality, Mr. de Montlosier gave the following definition of it, as obscure as it is odious: "It is at once an assembly of pious angels, a senate of the learned, a home of demons' intrigues." And he added: "This mysterious power which, under the name of Sodality, figures on the world's stage, seems to be as intricate in its composition as in its object, as confused in its object as in its origin." Improving on this ludicrous nonsense, Michelet later on solemnly declared that the Sodalities had "betrayed the whole of society to the Jesuits; doctors yielding up to them family secrets; notaries revealing the secrets of fortunes; magistrates securing them impunity." To which Charles Lacretelle in his *Histoire de France depuis la Restauration,* thought it clever to add these absurdities: "There existed for more than 10 years a vast society which counted on the Jesuits as spiritual leaders and especially as political heads. The Sodality received the inheritance of the Royalist secret societies, sanctifying their turbulent ideas. Its wealth was amassed by the liberality of opulent piety and by still more ample gifts than even a

warmly excited party spirit prompts. Father Ronsin was named Superior of the Sodality; all was placed under the patronage of St. Ignatius Loyola. The devout club had its affiliated societies, its connections. One might have said it was a Jacobin Club."

Lastly, M. de Vaulabelle, in his work on *Les Deux Restaurations,* lifts the veil on the manner in which the meetings of the Sodality are held. The Sodalists keep their eyes stubbornly fixed on a banner; the servers of the Mass "perform very envied duties, the customary prelude of high political and administrative favors." After the Mass, the Chapel is transformed into a parlor; all shake hands. Finally, the last characteristic detail: Fr. Ronsin wears a gold ring and the Sodalists silver ones (!).

"Similar puerilities," adds Mr. de Grandmaison, from whom we borrow these details, "are not worth discussing; we mention them as a proof of the nonsense that party spirit can cause to be written."

The watch word, however, was given by the sectarian faction: "The Jesuits and the Sodality." According to the Liberals, the Sodality was nothing else than a governmental laboratory. Their peaceable meetings were transformed, in the public opinion, into political clubs. Father Ronsin was believed to be mixed up in the intrigues of the government and to his astonishment found himself

set up as a sovereign dispenser of the favors of authority. A satirical poem, *La Ronsiade,* was written against him, and the humble Religious was almost denounced as a public enemy.

These attacks did not occur without exciting weak minds. One day, a young man, elegantly dressed, called at the Jesuit House in the Rue de Sèvres and asked to speak to Father Ronsin. The latter arrived and the visitor asked him to his face if "This is really he whom they call Ronsin." After which he overwhelmed him with injuries. The Religious listened to him unmoved. At a loss for further invectives, the young insulter demands: "Now, why don't you answer me?"—"But," answers Father Ronsin with the calmest air in the world, "you sent for me to hear you; I am listening." The poor harebrained creature blushed and finished the interview by going to Confession.

Nevertheless, a compromise was made and Father Ronsin was sacrificed. He departed from Paris in 1828, leaving 900 names inscribed on the register of the Sodality. Fathers de Rohan and Mathieu, who were to succeed one another in the See of Besançon and to honor it with the Cardinal's purple, received his perilous heritage. At last the Revolution of 1830 broke out and the Sodalities fell with the monarchy.

NEW LIFE

For nearly 20 years, the Sodalities were forced to lie dormant here and there in a few little seminaries. The mere name of Sodalist had become an offense. An entirely new branch, however, was not long in sprouting from their venerable stock. It was in 1832 that the first Sodality exclusively for young girls was instituted in France by Mother Lhuillier, a Religious of the Sacred Heart. The Blessed Mother Barat blessed this nascent work and with the aid of Father Druillet, S.J., propagated it in all the boarding schools of her Order.

As the Church in which the Sodalities are grafted, always stands erect again when the tempest has passed, so the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin reappeared with the first gleams of liberty. From 1848 to our own time, their history is written in all memoirs: it presents incidents which, as has already been seen here and there in the preceding pages, are in no wise inferior to the best that the annals of their glorious past offer us.

To the glory of the Catholic Rhenish Provinces we simply must add that it is in them that for the past 50 years the men's Sodalities have resumed their beneficent activity with the greatest vigor. The young men's Sodality at Aix-la-Chapelle, composed of 200 members, celebrated its golden jubilee

with splendor on 8 Oct., 1905. Eloquent discourses made known the wide influence it exerted on the Catholic social life of the whole region. It inaugurated in the cities several other Sodalities, each of which counts thousands of men among its members. It devoted itself to all works of piety and charity: religious lectures, conferences, annual retreats, Peter's Pence, foreign missions, public libraries, scientific lectures (to which it gave an enthusiasm which has been communicated to more than 70 other cities) and Sunday schools where the Sodalists instruct poor children, not to mention the very active part the Sodality took in the foundation of commercial unions.

Austria has not lagged behind in this magnificent movement. Vienna alone has 19 Sodalities of young men, with 1646 members; 29 of men, with 2451 members; 29 of young girls with 2842 and 11 of women with 2058—in all 84 Sodalities, and 8997 members, of whom 4097 are men or young men. These Sodalities are affiliated, according to the immemorial custom in Germany, to the *Prima Primaria.*

At the present time, the German speaking countries possess more than 2000 Sodalities, most of which are fervent and distinctly built on the three traditional foundations of devotion to Mary, individual perfection and the apostolate. The recruiting is done by the selection of the choice souls in the different Catholic associations, circles and

patronage. As an example, the Apprentices' Union of Mayence may be mentioned, which out of 360 associates has only 100 Sodalists. The same board governs Union and Sodality.

SODALITY PAPERS

In this historical notice we shall now give a first practical conclusion.[1] A few years ago, the tercentenary of the institution of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin was celebrated and it was commemorated not without solemnity nor a very comforting renewal of devotion.

All these pious associations undoubtedly have a bond in the unity of their spirit and their rules; but apart from this, they live isolated from one another. Would there not be some advantage in making them feel that they are all branches of one tree, all members of one family? Would it not be a means of developing in each of them a more intense zeal to fulfil the purpose which their founder designed for them, of animating them with a generous emulation to cause new shoots to bud on the common trunk? It is to this idea that we owe the *Sodalen Correspondenz für Marianische Congregationen,* a monthly review, the first number of which appeared at Vienna, Austria, on 25 March, 1896, Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

In the leading article, Father Henry Abel, S.J.,

[1] We borrow the idea and even the terms of Father Sommervogel, S.J., the well-known author of the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus.*

briefly indicated what the Sodality organ was going to contain:

1. Briefs, privileges, decisions issued by the Sovereign Pontiffs or by ecclesiastical Superiors as well as all that concerns the existence and organization of the Sodalities;

2. The general or local history of the Sodalities;

3. Information about their actual condition, their feasts, the works of piety or of zeal to which they specially devote themselves;

4. Obituary notices of deceased members;

5. Reports concerning the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, either at the present time or in the past;

6. Questions requiring answers to special difficulties;

7. Lastly, notices of works recommended to Sodalists.

The first number of the *Correspondenz* realized this plan in almost every point. After Father Abel's article: "What do we want?" Father Duhr discussed with the reader the question of the lay apostolate in the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, then Father Charles Ludwig published the commencement of a work on the members of the Hapsburg family who belonged to the Sodality. In the third section, a correspondent from Rome spoke of the Chapel of the *Prima Primaria* Sodality; another spoke of the Sodality of the ladies of Vienna under the title of the Immaculate Conception,

founded in 1854 by Father Schmude; still another told of the erection of that of Linz; a fourth, of that of Salzburg. There followed felicitations and encouragement from Gratz and Innsbruck; then came a few news items, an obituary notice, certain questions and answers, lastly some books recommended. Two illustrations embellished the number, the painting that adorns the *Prima Primaria* Chapel in Rome, and a fine portrait of the Archduke Charles II, the first of the Hapsburg Sodalists.

With the years this review has continued developing. It has taken as chief title: *Under the Banner of Mary*, and distinguished itself by a solidity of doctrine, a variety of documents, and a practical sense which make it a most efficacious instrument for direction and propaganda.

In 1907, a new bulletin, the *Präsides Correspondenz* (Directors' Correspondence), came to complete the first. Intended for Priests, it assumes a more serious and technical character.

These two periodicals are directed by the Jesuits, on whom the principal, though certainly not exclusive, care of the Sodalities of Our Lady is incumbent.

We may add, with Sommervogel, that the *Sodalen Correspondenz* deserves to be suggested to the Sodalists of other countries for imitation. What would prevent the publication of accounts of Sodalities in English, Flemish, French, Italian, Span-

ish, etc.? Certainly it is not for lack of subject-matter to maintain them, that they do not exist. If a little zeal and perseverance were everywhere employed to carry out this idea, in the end the necessary materials for writing a History of the Sodality would be gathered together, because this, we may conclude by saying, is the final purpose which the Austrian-German review has in view. For it the work will be easier than for others. Austria, Bohemia, Germany, Hungary, during the 17th and 18th centuries produced a considerable number of works on or for the Sodalities, for the Xenia, or New Year's gifts alone, distributed each year to the associates, form a precious and interesting collection.

This wish has been partly realized. Some other bulletins really do exist—still too few, however—of the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin.

We may mention specially the Roman *Stella Matutina*, the Hungarian *Mária-Kongregáció*, the Polish *Sodalis Marianus*, the German *Marienburg* and the United States *The Queen's Work*.

SODALITY CONGRESSES

Besides the press, the Sodality Congresses must be named as the most apt means of all to promote Marian associations. The German-speaking Sodalities give us magnificent examples in this respect. Since 1896, a *Sodalentag* is held almost every year in one or other of the important cities —notably in Salzburg, Austria, 1896; Vienna, 1897; Altötting, Bavaria, 1899; Mariazell, Austria, 1900; Fribourg, Switzerland, 1902; Mannheim, Baden, 1902; Cologne, Prussia, 1903; Rome, 1904; Einsiedeln, Switzerland, 1906; Linz, Austria, 1907. Numerous delegations are seen flocking to them, eager to hear the captivating and above all practical eloquence of choice orators. Thus it was at the Linz Congress in 1907, where 200 Sodalities were represented. The splendor of these gatherings is not astonishing when it is remembered that the Sodalities of Our Lady are one of the living forces of Catholic Austria. In that country they maintain the solidity of religious convictions, the practise of the Sacraments, the coherence of the Catholic elements, the spirit of discipline and of fellowship which keep Christian societies from disintegration and ruin.

A brief account of the *Sodalentag* of Linz will show the reader what these celebrations are.

Omitting the splendid procession and the opening ceremonies, we find ourselves at the first session.

"There one feels oneself really in the presence of an extraordinary moral force," writes an eye-witness, "which a perfectly constructed machine, set in motion by master workmen, develops." Among the workmen, the place of honor belongs indisputably to a Jesuit whose name is a synonym among the Catholics of Vienna for indefatigable zeal and cheerful activity. A stranger might accuse the papers of bombast when they commonly call him "the great man of the people," and he might also be astonished at the frantic applause that makes the hall tremble, when the President of the *Sodalentag* introduces Father Abel, S.J. There is no need of listening long to learn his importance and to be carried away together with all the auditors by the good sense, clearness and apostolic energy of his eloquence. "In what do the actual task and practical activity of the Marian Sodalities for men consist?" Such is the subject of his speech which comprises the entire program of the Congress.

This task, the orator resumed in four words: "Apostolate, charity, defensive, offensive."

"But whence must the energy to accomplish the task be drawn?" This was the purpose of an address by another Jesuit, Father Hofmann, S.J., a Professor at the Innsbruck University. He pointed

out that the great secret of being a true Sodalist and Catholic man of action, is the care and practise of the *Interior Life*, which alone forms the character.

These were what might be termed the platform speeches of the Congress. On the following days other orators followed each other, considering the Marian Sodalities under their divers aspects. Young men's Sodalities had a very large part. Father Herkenrath, S.J., of Feldkirch College in the Tyrol called particular attention to the young workingmen's Sodalities.

"To-day," the orator said, "during the decisive period which extends over the years between 14 and 24, the young laborer is exposed, almost alone, to the greatest perils for his soul, in the face of exigencies considerably greater in the struggle for life, than those of former times; he claims, therefore, the warmest solicitude.

"Can the Sodality assume this care in all its extent, and ought it to do so? Yes, and its motto ought to be 'All things to all men.' To realize that, there are 3 conditions:

"1. The selection of a choice group into which at the end of school all the elements of a model Sodality may be introduced;

"2. The careful formation of the Sodalists in an irreproachable religious life, without which all else will be of no value;

"3. Preparation for active participation in the

lay apostolate, by instruction in apologetics, by practical studies in social economy, by a general training, without forgetting sport, which refreshes the mind and strengthens the body."

Then came the turn of the Sodalities in the grammar schools, a question which a suspicious policy makes a delicate one in that country. Father Andlau, S.J., Rector of the great College of Kalksburg, near Vienna, had to commence by making it clear that Sodalities do not come legally under the laws that govern civil associations. A hot discussion followed, which ended to the advantage of the learned lecturer.

Distinguished secular Priests also spoke, such as the deputy of Baden, Dr. Schofer, who for the past 12 years had directed the Sodality of the University of Freiburg in Breisgau.

"During the period of the *maturity* examination" (the French baccalauréat), he justly remarked, "until their entrance into public life, students are too much neglected. They require Priests to attend to them specially and exclusively, and the best form which these Priests can give to their ministry is the Sodality. By it these young men will be efficaciously protected against the bad influence of the society in which they are condemned to live, against Bacchus and Venus. Are these Sodalities possible? Undoubtedly, since some already exist. In fact their foundation presents but one serious difficulty, that of an observant Director." Of a

truth, a most important question, that of Director, and so it was the object of much exchange of opinion. The speakers were intent on bringing out the fact that a Sodality governed by a good Director was a well-piloted boat which in calm weather goes straight ahead and when a storm rumbles, fights victoriously against the waves.

The closing of the *Sodalentag* was a most solemn event.

"On entering the immense hall into which 4000 persons were crowded," says Father Brucker, "my attention was first of all drawn to the presidential platform. At the back, standing out in relief against hangings in the Papal colors, surrounded by a forest of flowers and flooded with electric light, I perceived the white statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, on the right the calm and smiling face of the Holy Father, on the left the bust of the Emperior Francis Joseph II who had answered the courteous message of the Congress by the follow-telegram: 'His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty thanks the Sodalities for their patriotic homage and pious wishes.' "

Then Mr. Ebenhoch, the Governor of Upper Austria, of which Linz is the capital, himself a fervent Sodalist, rose to resume in a masterly address the work of the Congress. He concluded in this manner:

"And lastly there is an essential point which all the orators have brought out with great reason,

namely, that for every success prayer is necessary. When King Philip Augustus of France, sailing towards the Holy Land, was passing the coast of Sicily, a fearful tempest arose. Already the sailors were losing courage; they failed in their duties and the fleet was on the verge of perishing. At that moment, the Prince appeared before them and said: 'At any rate, hold on till 12, for at midnight the monks of Clairvaux rise and pray for France and for the King.' At midnight, indeed, the tempest abated and the fleet was able to pursue its course. In our times, too, the storm is gathering over our heads. The powers of evil are rising against the good, and victory may, indeed, seem doubtful to us. Well, weak as is my voice, I, too, should like to cry out to all Catholics: 'Hold fast, hold fast in the struggle, because the Sodalists pray without ceasing; their *Memorares* will obtain for you the strength to fight bravely and the grace to conquer for God and for his Church.' "

Among the resolutions approved by the *Sodalentag* is the following one: "The Congress board shall address to His Holiness in the name of all the German Sodalities represented at Linz a respectful petition for the speedy beatification of the first martyr Sodalist, the Jesuit James Salès, put to death in 1593 by the Calvinists of Aubenas for defending the dogma of the Real Presence."

Some time afterwards, Mr. Ebenhoch became a member of the Austrian Ministry. Mr. Beck, the

President of the Cabinet, was himself a Sodalist of Our Lady. Happy are the nations while they are governed by such men.

THE END

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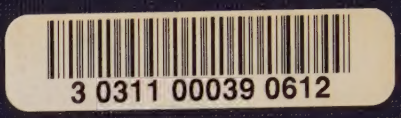
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